

Supreme Court of Ohio & The Ohio Judicial System: Justice Appointed to Health and Juvenile Task Force

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http://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/PIO/news/2011/juvenileTaskForce_102811.asp

One provision in the newly adopted Ohio House Bill 86 creates an Interagency Task Force on Mental Health and Juvenile Justice.

Supreme Court Justice Yvette McGee Brown was appointed to the task force by Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor on Sept. 30, and on Nov. 15 the group will meet for the first time.

The task force will investigate and make recommendations on how to effectively treat teens "who suffer from serious mental illness or emotional and behavioral disorders, while giving attention to the needs of Ohio's economy."

Justice McGee Brown will join 24 other task force members including Harvey Reed, the director of Youth Services and the task force's chair, Tracy Plouck, director of Ohio Department of Mental Health, Greg Moody, director of Governor's Office of Health Transformation, Stan Heffner, director of Ohio Department of Education, and Jill Beeler, chief counsel for the Juvenile Division of the Ohio Public Defender's Office. Other members include representatives from the Ohio chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, several board-certified and licensed child and teen psychiatrists as well as members of the General Assembly and Ohio Judicial Conference.

"I look forward to putting my experience to work on the Interagency Task Force. I saw many cases as a juvenile court judge where unaddressed treatment and special education needs directly contributed to delinquency issues, so I'm familiar with the challenges we face," Justice McGee Brown said. "We have done a good job in Ohio with our diversionary programs for adult offenders through the Supreme Court Specialized Dockets Program. Now it's time to take a second look at what we offer our young people."

The task force will review current training and procedures of staff as well as come up with a system that will effectively help teens and find a way to pay for those services.

"Just within the population of DYS youth in facilities, 54 percent are in need of mental health treatment. For females the percentage is much higher," Reed said. "The correction system is not designed to provide the depth of services needed for these youth."

The task force is expected to issue its report of findings and recommendations to Governor John Kasich by March 31, 2012.