

# Executive Summary: An Evaluation of the Behavioral Health/Juvenile Justice (BHJJ) Initiative: 2013-2015

## Mahoning County Results

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: AN EVALUATION OF THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH/JUVENILE JUSTICE (BHJJ) INITIATIVE: 2013–2015 MAHONING COUNTY RESULTS

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Juvenile justice-involved youth with serious behavioral health issues often have inadequate and limited access to care to address their complex and multiple needs. Ohio's Behavioral Health/Juvenile Justice (BHJJ) initiative was intended to transform and expand the local systems' options to better serve these youth. Recent emphasis was placed on decreasing the population of ODYS facilities while providing alternatives to incarceration. Twelve counties participated in BHJJ in the newest biennium: Cuyahoga, Franklin, Cuyahoga, Hamilton, Lucas, Summit, Wayne, Holmes, Trumbull, Mahoning, Lorain, and Wood. BHJJ was funded by a partnership between the Ohio Departments of Youth Services (ODYS) and Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS). The Begun Center for Violence Prevention Research and Education at Case Western Reserve University provided research and evaluation services for the program.

The BHJJ program diverts youth from local and state detention centers into more comprehensive, community-based mental and behavioral health treatment. The BHJJ program enrolled juvenile justice-involved youth between 10-18 years of age who met several of the following criteria: a DSM IV Axis I diagnosis, substantial mental status impairment, a co-occurring substance use/abuse problem, a pattern of violent or criminal behavior, and a history of multi-system involvement.

### **Demographics and Youth Characteristics**

- ❖ In Mahoning County, 23 youth have been enrolled in BHJJ (60.9% males, 54.5% Caucasian). The average age at intake was about 16 years.
- ❖ Youth averaged 1.6 Axis I diagnoses. Thirty-three percent of females and 15.4% of males were diagnosed with Conduct Disorder, and 30.8% of males and 11.1% of females were diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).
- ❖ Caregivers reported that 22% of the females had a history of sexual abuse, over 33% talked about suicide, and over 12% had attempted suicide. Over 54% of males and 55% of females had family members who were diagnosed with or showed signs of depression.
- ❖ According to the OYAS, 81% of the youth served in Mahoning County were either moderate or high risk.
- ❖ Of the youth enrolled in Mahoning County, about 23% had a felony charge in the 12 months prior to enrollment.

### **Educational Information**

- ❖ Nearly 62% of the youth were suspended or expelled from school in the year prior to their enrollment. At termination, 80% of youth were attending school.
- ❖ At termination, workers reported that 90.9% of youth were attending school more or about the same amount as they were before starting treatment.

### **Mental/Behavioral Health Outcomes**

- ❖ Results from the Ohio Scales indicated the caregiver, worker, and youth all reported increased youth functioning and decreased problem severity while in BHJJ treatment.
- ❖ Youth reported decreased six month substance use with respect to most of the commonly used substances, including alcohol and marijuana.
- ❖ There was a 69 percent reduction in the risk for out of home placement from intake to termination for all youth. Twelve percent of successful completers and 50% of unsuccessful completers were at risk for out of home placement at termination.

### **Termination and Recidivism Information**

- ❖ Eighty percent of the youth terminated from the BHJJ program were identified locally as successful treatment completers. The average length of stay in the program was approximately 5 months.
- ❖ Youth demonstrated decreased juvenile court involvement after termination from BHJJ compared to before enrollment.
- ❖ One year after termination, no one had a new felony charge. Of the youth entering BHJJ with at least one felony charge, none were charged with a new felony in the 12 months following BHJJ termination.
- ❖ None of the 22 youth enrolled in BHJJ for whom we had recidivism data were sent to an ODYS facility at any time following their enrollment in BHJJ.