



Department of
Youth Services

Message from DYS Director Harvey Reed Advancing Mental Health and Juvenile Justice

April 4, 2013

Dear Staff and Interested Stakeholders:

I am excited to share with you the work that is being accomplished to advance mental health and juvenile justice. As chair of the Ohio Interagency Task Force on Mental Health and Juvenile Justice, I am grateful to collaborate with a wide range of professionals, organizations, public servants, families and other stakeholders to more effectively meet the needs of juvenile-justice involved youth with mental health concerns. This is important work because youth committed to DYS present a variety of complexities, including a significant need for behavioral health services. Approximately half of all youth in DYS facilities are on the mental health caseload, and these youth often have multiple disorders. Given the complexity and severity of needs, effectively treating these youth is challenging in the current juvenile justice system.

The Task Force delivered recommendations to the Governor, General Assembly and Supreme Court in October 2012. Recommendations call for an effective and integrative system of care where the systems that may impact youth and their families, work collaboratively to develop and improve the earlier identification of mental health needs and the service delivery and financing of systems and services responsive to the needs of youth. The full report is available on our website at www.dys.ohio.gov (click on "Mental Health and Juvenile Justice Task Force" under "Featured Links").

Last week Assistant Director Peery and I, along with other DYS staff, met with Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH) Director Tracy Plouck and her staff as well as staff from the Office of Medicaid Assistance to discuss efforts. Progress includes the following:

- Addressing youth-specific needs through the Ohio Ex-Offender Reentry Coalition adopting a juvenile branch.
- Preparing for the implementation of the Community Linkage program to help youth with behavioral health needs receive linkage to community behavioral health services and other supports.
- Coordinating the implementation of a trauma screening tool for high-risk youth, which will be piloted at select detention centers.

Collaborative efforts continue regarding the impact of Medicaid expansion and consideration for an enhanced level of mental health care.

Our efforts are making a difference for youth with mental health needs. I am pleased with the progress to date, and we will continue to improve the way we respond to youth in our care.

Sincerely,

Harvey J. Reed, Director
Department of Youth Services