

**Harvey J. Reed, Director**  
**Ohio Department of Youth Services**

## Responsible Public Policy

The Department of Youth Services (DYS) touches the lives of thousands of youth in Ohio. Beyond youth in DHS facilities and those on parole, DHS funds and supports over 610 direct service programs throughout the state offering nearly 110,000 youth (based on annual program admissions) opportunities and services to effect positive change.



## Progress Made During the Last Year

DYS is committed to continuous improvement, and I am proud of the progress our agency achieved in my first year as Director. Our staff are devoted to doing what is best for youth, and the following accomplishments highlight the advancements made during the last year.

### Reduced Facility Population

DYS has enhanced community alternatives for youth to serve the right youth in the right place with the right treatment. We have worked closely with community partners and judges to expand appropriate options in the community for those youth who do not pose a public safety risk. Because of these efforts, the average daily facility population has decreased from an average of 768 youth in April 2011 to 605 youth in April 2012.

### Targeted RECLAIM

Targeted RECLAIM funds evidence-based interventions in juvenile courts that historically have committed the most youth to the department. Participating courts commit to maintain or reduce DHS admissions. This initiative has increased from 6 to 14 counties. Along with Behavioral Health/Juvenile Justice efforts, Targeted RECLAIM has contributed to a reduction in admissions by participating counties of 25.5% in Fiscal Year 2012 (through March 2012).

### Parmadale Treatment Alternative for Females

In partnership with Parmadale Institute and Beech Brook, DHS began a community residential treatment option for females with behavioral health needs. The community alternative is an 8-bed secure setting in Parma, Ohio designed as a step-down option for females shortly after being committed to the department or after showing progress in a DHS facility. This community alternative provides comprehensive behavioral health treatment, gender-specific care and evidence-based programming. Youth receive comprehensive case management, group and individual counseling and family sessions.

### Ohio Interagency Task Force on Mental Health and Juvenile Justice

In September 2011, Governor Kasich appointed me the chairperson of the newly created Ohio Interagency Task Force on Mental Health and Juvenile Justice. The diverse group is working on a comprehensive plan to treat justice-involved youth who are also mentally ill. The work is addressing statewide information and sharing, ensuring access to mental health services,

responding to the needs of youth committed to DHS, protective and risk factors, and the role of prevention. The group plans to complete its recommendations in the coming months.

### Release Identification Cards for Youth

In partnership with the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV), a youth now is eligible to receive a valid State of Ohio Identification card to improve access to needed services. The department issues a Youthful Offender Release Identification Card upon a youth's release to parole supervision. The BMV has entered into a memorandum of understanding to accept the DHS issued release card as an acceptable form of identification. Obtaining this identification enables access to such needed services as housing, public assistance, education and treatment for medical, mental health and substance abuse. Having access to these services reduces the likelihood of a youth committing a new offense.

### Second Chance Act Grant Projects

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs is providing DHS over a million dollars in "Second Chance Act" Grants. DHS is receiving more than \$600,000 from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention through the Juvenile Mentoring Initiative. The grant provides mentoring services to youth returning to Cuyahoga, Franklin, Montgomery and Summit Counties. Mentoring begins four to six months prior to a youth's release and continues in the community for at least an additional six months. Nearly \$500,000 is being received from the Bureau of Justice Assistance through the Technology Careers Training Demonstration Projects for Incarcerated Adults and Juveniles Initiative. The grant assists juvenile offenders from Franklin County with training and employment for information technology-based careers.

### Next Steps

DYS staff are appreciated for their dedication and persistence in enhancing our work during the past year. While we celebrate our accomplishments, we commit to continue our efforts to improve the quality of services for the youth in our care. Along with our many stakeholders, we will take our agency to the next level as we work to improve safety and security, enhance community capacity and prepare youth to successfully return to their communities.

