

Executive Summary: An Evaluation of the Behavioral Health/Juvenile Justice (BHJJ) Initiative: 2006-2015

Results from a Ten-Year Outcome Evaluation

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RESULTS FROM A TEN-YEAR OUTCOME EVALUATION

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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 designed to provide these youth evidence and community-based behavioral health treatment in lieu of detention. Twelve counties participated in BHJJ during the most recent biennium: Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Holmes, Lorain, Lucas, Mahoning, Montgomery, Summit, Trumbull, Wayne, and Wood. BHJJ was funded through a partnership between the Ohio Department of Youth Services (ODYS) and Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS). The Begun Center for Violence Prevention Research and Education at Case Western Reserve University provided evaluation services for the program.

Demographics and Youth Characteristics

- ❖ 3,495 youth have been enrolled in BHJJ (61.4% males, 51.9% non-white). In the past two years, more non-whites (58.6%) than whites (41.4%) and males (66.5%) than females (33.5%) have been enrolled.
- ❖ Youth averaged 2.3 Axis I diagnoses. Females were significantly more likely to be diagnosed with Depressive Disorders, Alcohol-related Disorders, Bipolar Disorder, and Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Mood Disorder and Adjustment Disorders. Males were significantly more likely to be diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Cannabis-Related Disorders, and Conduct Disorder.
- ❖ Over 43% of males and 38% of females were diagnosed with both a mental health and substance use diagnosis.
- ❖ Caregivers reported that 27% of the females had a history of sexual abuse, nearly 50% talked about suicide, and over 23% had attempted suicide. Over 60% of males and 68% of females had family members who were diagnosed with or showed signs of depression.
- ❖ According to the OYAS, 77.2% of the BHJJ youth were moderate or high risk to reoffend.
- ❖ In the current BHJJ counties, 35.4% of youth had felony charges in the 12 months prior to enrollment, ranging from 11.1% in Holmes and Trumbull Counties to 93.9% in Summit County.

Educational Information

- ❖ About 68% of the youth were suspended or expelled from school in the year prior to their BHJJ enrollment. During treatment, 36% were suspended or expelled. At intake, 38.2% of youth earned mostly A's, B's, or C's while at termination, almost 50% of youth earned mostly A's, B's, or C's. At termination, 83.5% of youth were attending school.
- ❖ At termination, workers reported that 89.2% of youth were attending school more or about the same amount as they were before starting treatment.

Mental/Behavioral Health Outcomes

- ❖ BHJJ youth reported a significant decrease in trauma symptoms from intake to termination.
- ❖ Results from the Ohio Scales indicated the caregiver, worker, and youth all reported increased youth functioning and decreased problem severity while in BHJJ treatment.
- ❖ Both males and females reported decreased substance use with respect to most of the commonly used substances, including alcohol and marijuana.
- ❖ Youth demonstrated more than a 50% reduction in the risk for out of home placement at the time of termination. Eight percent of successful completers and 55.4% of unsuccessful completers were at risk for out of home placement at termination.
- ❖ Ninety-three percent of caregivers agreed that they were satisfied with the BHJJ services their child received and 96% agreed that the services received were culturally and ethnically sensitive.

Termination and Recidivism Information

- ❖ Nearly 66% percent of the youth terminated from the BHJJ program completed treatment successfully. Nearly 64% of youth enrolled in the past biennium were identified as successful treatment completers. The average length of stay in the program was approximately 7 months (5.6 months for youth enrolled during previous biennium).
- ❖ Successful treatment completion in BHJJ produced lower percentages of subsequent juvenile court charges, felonies, misdemeanors, and delinquent adjudications than unsuccessful completion, although both groups demonstrated decreased juvenile court involvement after termination from BHJJ compared to before enrollment.
- ❖ One year after termination, 16.2% of successful treatment completers and 22.1% of unsuccessful treatment completers had a new felony charge. Of the youth entering BHJJ with a felony charge, 27.2% of successful treatment completers and 34.2% of unsuccessful treatment completers were charged with a new felony in the 12 months following BHJJ termination.
- ❖ One hundred and eight of the 2,906 youth (3.7%) enrolled in BHJJ for whom we had recidivism data were sent to an ODYS facility at any time following their enrollment in BHJJ.
- ❖ Using only the direct State contribution to BHJJ of \$17.6 million since 2006, the average cost per youth enrolled in BHJJ was \$5,035. The FY15 per diem to house a youth at an ODYS institution was \$541 and the average length of stay was 12.6 months. Based on these numbers, the estimated cost of housing the average youth at an ODYS facility in FY15 was approximately \$205,580.