Memo

To: Chairs, Maine Juvenile Justice System Assessment & Reinvestment Task Force

From: Commissioner Randall A. Liberty and Associate Commissioner Colin O’Neill

Date: May 28, 2020

Re: MDOC Juvenile System Update

So much has changed in Maine and across the world since we’ve had an opportunity to be together discussing Maine’s youth. While the onslaught of COVID-19 has changed day-to-day life dramatically, the Department remains committed to the result that all Maine youth successfully transition into adulthood. The Juvenile Division’s contribution to this result is to ensure that all justice involved youth experience a fair, equitable, and responsive juvenile justice system that provides them with positive outcomes.

This update provides you information on MDOC’s progress in meeting this commitment and the work we are doing in response to some recommendations outlined in the February 25, 2020 report from the Center for Children’s Law and Policy.

Population
As you’ll see in the graphs below, the population at Long Creek has been on a steady decline the last four months. Since the start of 2020 a heightened focus among DOC’s juvenile division staff and stakeholders has focused on the safe release of detained and committed youth to the community.

At the start of 2020, there were a total of 58 youth in Long Creek: 32 committed and 26 detained. As of May 22, there were 33 youth in Long Creek: 24 committed and 9 detained.

Eight of the 58 youth were provided early discharges. Some were transitioned to more appropriate level of care, others had demonstrated safe and stable behavior on community reintegration for a consistent amount of time and were able to live in community settings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maine Juvenile Corrections Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1/4/2020 | 5/22/2020 | % Reduction
Funding Opportunities

Application for funding to provide afterschool and day reporting programs to rural and tribal youth in Presque Isle was been submitted to OJJDP. The collaborative application between the Girls and Boys Club of Presque Isle, Aroostook Band of Micmacs in Aroostook County and the MDOC requested $500,000 over five years.

Funding in the amount of $62,000 has been journaled to MDOC from Maine Juvenile Justice Advisory Group, for regional care teams and statewide providers to implement High Fidelity Wraparound services.

A collaborative application for funding from OJJDP to provide prevention and intervention services to girls involved with the juvenile system is currently being written between Muskie School of Public Service and MDOC.

Community Partnerships

In partnership with the Commission of Indigent Legal Services and MDOC a program has been developed that assigns all committed youth defense counsel by the court to ensure continuity of legal representation and individual advocacy. All committed youth at Long Creek have been assigned and have met with their respective attorneys. These assigned attorneys are provided training by Long Creek staff.

In partnership with Muskie School of Public Services and the Maine Center for Juvenile Policy and Law, regional care teams of multi-departmental/provider/advocate stakeholders are meeting to review youth involved with Maine’s juvenile justice system. Teams work to identify community-based interventions for each youth to prevent or reduce unnecessary secure confinement; identify significant treatment or intervention gaps; and report findings to the Children’s Cabinet.

Training

The assessment and evaluation team at Long Creek developed a new intake protocol designed to expedite targeted risk reduction interventions for youth while in Long Creek. Ultimately shortening the length of stay in secure conformation.

Fifteen Juvenile Community Corrections Officers (JCCO) were trained in the use of the Forward-Thinking Curriculum. This cognitive behavioral journal programming is designed to be used with youth on
probation. JCCOs will use this curriculum for targeted case planning and/or as a graduated response for probation violations instead of punitive sanctions.

**Office of Children and Family Services and MDOC Juvenile Services**

Through a comprehensive rate study performed with input from providers, a new MST/FFT rate was implemented on May 1, 2020. This new rate is one of the highest in the country and makes a structural improvement from an hourly rate to a weekly rate basis.

The rate study also included TF-CBT, resulting also in a new, higher rate. This rate, however, is contingent on the provider meeting national certification in TF-CBT. In order to assist providers to meet that certification level, OCFS, in partnership with the Children’s Cabinet will be implementing a training project (see next item).

Through Fund for Healthy Maine support and the Children’s Cabinet, OCFS will be implementing a nationally certified training project for Maine therapists. Originally, the project was to be completed in a model of three in-person cohort trainings of 60 therapists each. Due to COVID-19, OCFS has worked with the national trainers to pivot to 5 cohorts of 25 therapists each using a video-based training format. OCFS will be covering the full cost of training and one year of clinical consultation along with a stipend for the time when therapists are in training. This project is slated to begin late summer/fall 2020.

Through Fund for Healthy Maine support and the Children’s Cabinet, OCFS will be implementing a crisis aftercare pilot in Aroostook County beginning this fall. This project will provide individualized crisis aftercare supports for youth using crisis services. The intent is to connect the youth and family with community supports and services to avoid further intensive hospitalization or crisis services. The project will be carefully evaluated and, if successful, may be replicated in other areas of the State.

OCFS has closely worked with providers and other State agencies to assist children’s behavioral health providers during the COVID-19 pandemic. This has included removing barriers to telehealth services, allowing for more flexible licensing provisions, and limited rate support (particularly for PNMI providers). OCFS has also led bi-weekly open “town hall” calls to answer questions and provide guidance to providers and has provided ongoing guidance and advisories on the OCFS COVID response webpage.

Sincerely,

Randall A. Liberty and Colin O’Neill.