

Notes/"whiteboard" from discussion about small, home-like commitment facilities. 2.17.22

BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- secure care – hard to put people there will very serious offenses (direct file/AJO/transfer upon initial commitment) – impact on community
- walking away becomes an escape from secure care
- public response
- not being able to serve many youth
- reforms have reduced commitment population, so now the young people DYS is getting have more often been in community placement previously and many have a run history (part of secure for some kids is to prevent running, help them slow down, learn skills and step down to community)
- right now only 6% of newly committed youth are eligible to go directly to community placement
- if they are secure, hard to have enough space for kids to be outside, etc. – and start to get pushback from the community if there are secure homes next door
- how do we define secure?
- CDHS is responsible for actions – have to make sure kids are in the right placements
- DYS requesting funding for year-long study to look at DYS-run community program. Doesn't go as far as this, it would be non-secure, and a step-down.
- NY small facilities are small but providing education within the building; also in the MO model they keep pods together for education. But what about kids at different levels, with disabilities (IEP/504 plan needs would have to be met)? Detriments to small groups that are not included in larger community environments?
- Ideally, kids could come out of secure into a model where they can go to school/work and come home to a home-like place at night.
- has NY had the same success and reforms as CO? How many youth does NY system serve (commitment population), and how many end up in one of these settings (and when – immediately?) and what is their age/sentence/etc.? Not step-down (the 3 profiled in presentation). Elise will provide answers to the other Qs. Dana Walters also has data and will share.
- education: lose the economy of scale if you are going to do education in-house; a cooperative school district may be willing to partner so DYS doesn't have to create the education infrastructure alone; for commitment, DYS is funded by general fund to provide commitment education (would require a major change for school districts to do it) and detention ed is provided by local school districts (but no MOU/contract with school districts and schools are interested in having them); non-congruent issues as well with schools v. DYS like days off, consistency, so Anders thinks DYS is better off serving the education needs of committed youth

-commitment population – many are over 18 and have GED/diploma before leaving; if in a secure home in community, the career/continuing ed opportunities will be limited

STAFFING

-unique staffing issues/challenges right now

-longer term – what would staffing challenges be? Build team of staff by pod. If DYS moved 10 kids out to a community home setting, that would mean moving a pod + staff. Need everything – food services, medical, behavioral health, director. In current smaller is better model, all those pieces are there. Would need more FTE and would lose the economy of scale. Need a director at each facility.

-12-14 months from now DYS will have a better idea if they could stand something like this up. They've looked at state-owned properties. Interested in the idea.