



COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

June 26, 2023

DSCYFD Administration Campus, Conference Room #201

1825 Faulkland Rd. Wilmington, DE 19805

Minutes

In Attendance:

Renee Ciconte, Director, Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services

Rebecca Richmond, Ph.D., Deputy Director, Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services

Trim Brandaeu, Community Member

Espie Hart, Superintendent, DYRS

Eric McLaurin, Assistant Superintendent, DYRS

Tanya Banks, Superintendent, DYRS

Danielle Stevenson, Assistant Superintendent, DYRS

Natasha Everett, Quality Assurance Manager, DYRS

Steven Canon, Admin III, DYRS

Carrie Hyla, Professional Standards Manager, DYRS

Randy Hill-Haskins, Program Manager, DYRS

John Schmidt, Community Member

Kathy Covelli-Reyes, DOE

LaShanta Mitchell, DOL

Welcome/Introductions

The meeting began at 9:10am with general opening remarks. Director Ciconte congratulated Ms. Covelli-Reyes on her upcoming retirement after 35 ½ years of service. Ms. Covelli-Reyes will continue as chair of the Community Advisory Board after her retirement.

Juvenile Probation Re-Classification

Director Ciconte informed the group that the division is currently working through a re-classification of the Family Service Specialist series, which DYRS Probation Officers fall under. Due to the changing role of Juvenile Probation Officers, the division believes a re-classification is needed to accurately reflect the work PO's do. The new classification will be Juvenile Probation and Aftercare Officer. It was noted that some officers, including those in the GVI unit supervising high risk youth, will be carrying firearms, which has to be approved by leadership and the cabinet secretary. Current Probation Officers will be grandfathered in and are not required to carry a weapon, though those carrying firearms will be receiving a higher compensation. Some groups will not have a need for a weapon. The group was informed that Probation Officers carry other non-deadly weapons to include OC spray. Those officers armed



will attend a 16-week training program and attendance will be determined by interest and seniority.

The group continued with an open discussion about the contributing factors to delinquency and the effects of the pandemic on these youth.

24/7 GPS Monitoring

During the last budget initiative, the division requested funds to begin 24/7 GPS monitoring and response. These funds were approved; however, the division has been unsuccessful in filling the positions. The SJO unit now has 7 vacancies. These positions pay considerably less than the equivalent DOC positions. Currently Probation Officers are working overtime overnight to monitor GPSs. This practice will cease on 08/01/23 when the current vendor, BI, takes over monitoring. SJO will respond to tampers if they are on duty and available. Once the unit is staffed, they will be performing field response to these alerts.

OC Spray

Director Ciconte informed the group that it has been a year since OC spray was re-implemented into the secure care facilities. The division recently expanded the number of staff who carry the spray, previously just supervisors and management. The spray is now carried by some YCS III staff and recreation staff. As a result, injuries have decreased, staff feel safer, and it appears to be deterring behavior that leads to restraints.

Staffing

Director Ciconte provided an update on staffing, noting that the labor market has been softening and staffing is improving. DYRS has been able to bring in quality staff throughout the division, reducing the number of vacancies and overtime costs in the facilities.

Naloxone Training

Director Ciconte informed the group that the division has recently trained Probation Officers on the use of Naloxone. Probation Officers will now be carrying this on their person in the field and is another tool for them to use.

Cottages Update

DYRS is still currently running only 2 cottages. DFS has been using the empty cottage for youth to stay, keeping them from sleeping in DSCYF offices. DFS struggles to staff this, so in return DYRS has been assisting.

Community Member Updates

John Schmidt addressed the group and talked about the Criminology vs. Theology conference that Rev. Mark Gardner held for facility youth and the Manhood Meetings. He shared that the conference was rewarding for him and the facility youth. The group was reminded that the division accepts donations of suits for these events.



YOUTH REHABILITATIVE
SERVICES

LaShanta Mitchell of the Department of Labor addressed the group and discussed pre-transition services DOL may be able to offer DYRS youth. She has offered to hold an information session for families. Director Ciconte suggested that she attend family nights in the facilities.

Next Meeting: **September 11, 2023 @ 9:00am**
 DSCYF Admin Campus, 1825 Faulkland Rd., MultiPurpose Building #9