COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

March 23, 2026
9:30am to 11:30pm
DSCYF Admin Conference Room #199
1825 Faulkland Rd., Wilmington, DE 19805

Attendees:
Renee Ciconte, Director, DYRS
Rebecca Richmond, Ph.D., Deputy Director, DYRS
Carrie Hyla, Social Services Senior Administrator, DYRS
Ashley Bruncsak, Community Service Program Administrator, DYRS
John Schmidt, Community Member, DCGP
Tracy Whitehouse, DYRS Quality Assurance Manager, DYRS
Ian Smith, Superintendent, DYRS
Tim Brandau, Community Member
Kathleen COVELLI-REYES, Community Member
Tanya Banks, Superintendent, DYRS
Bethany Dudash, Psychologist, DPBHS
Mitch Holland, Community Member

Welcome
The meeting began at 9:31 am with remarks from Director Ciconte welcoming the group and the discussion of topics on the agenda.

Campus Updates/Changes:
Director Ciconte spoke on all the changes on the campus. She advised the largest project happening is the Cleve White Building, which is slated to be completed this year. We will be relocating the people at Concord Plaza which will save on leasing the building in Concord Plaza. The move is supposed to take place in September. Employees that will be relocating will be the CAS unit and Fiscal unit. The next project is graciously giving DFS Grace Cottage to help prevent DFS kids coming in at night from sleeping in offices. DFS will run the building themselves. They will be relocating the DFS hotline to Grace Cottage. Mowlds Cottage will be utilized for female residents, which the numbers for females have decreased. Snowden will remain for boys.

NCCDC Leadership Transition:
Director Ciconte advised there is a vacant superintendent position at NCCDC. Currently, Director Ciconte, Dr. Richmond and Ms. Kenney have been helping to fill in the coverage. The new superintendent is starting in May. She is relocating from Arizona where she did similar work in a facility with about 150 kids. We are looking forward to her coming and will send out communication once I work on that and get her started. We are still recruiting for the Assistant

Superintendent position for that building but it is an exempt position. I posted the position 1 time but didn't find any one in those applications, so I've just been kind of work of mouth.

Targeted Case Management and HER Implementation:

Dr. Richmond advised, we successfully completed an RFP process and have selected a Delaware Center for Justice for our targeted case management provider. So, this is part of the Medicaid expansion so that kids as they're leaving Ferris. The cottages will be eligible for targeted case management services paid for by Medicaid for 30 days pre and 30 days post release. So, we have found that we're already in compliance with the standards around Medicare and healthcare, et cetera. For these kids, it's just a targeted case management piece. So, Tracy is working on finalizing the contract with them. However, our implementation is otherwise on hold now pending notice from the MMA. About when they will be ready for us to build them for this service. So, we cannot finalize the contract until we have that information from the MMA. We are otherwise ready to go on our side of this. So, we have worked painstakingly with focus. To develop a report that will be transmitted to DMMA, so they know who is eligible to be filled for this. We just can't move forward until DMMA can accept that. So, we are mandated to complete this process by the end of the year. I am waiting any day for an update from the MMA about when we will move forward on that piece. So, we are excited about that. That will be another seat at the table and it's because it is with DCJ. They will start when that is admitted to Ferris so that we have that person in place. And then that will help to increase, I hate to say compliance, but with family's willingness to work with us to make sure that our kids are getting the services, especially when they need them returned to the community.

We have finally. After a three-year process, purchasing an electronic health record, we have partnered with our sister division of PBH to purchase all of that. We have just signed that contract and are working on developing our implementation teams. I do believe we will be able to be up and running with Qualifax by the end of this year and then at some point next year that system will integrate with focus to automatically pull some information back and forth. So, we are excited to join around the 21st session. As we know that I think we may be the only medical services that still need to pay at the shots probably anywhere. So, we are excited to move forward with that process. All of us make sure she any care nurses that work in our facilities, all our doctors, they all use this and then we'll see what we are. Yes, description. We'll be able to be able to do this through our system as well. Yeah, we're doing paper stuff and our payer. So, this will include e-scribing labs so that it will hopefully cut down on some communication times that have like.

Division Legislation Impacts:

Director Ciconte advised a couple of things we're working on in the in the division legislation. So again, we're back in legislative session. We have a little break in the Joint Finance Committee hearings. We're back in session again. Our two bills that are part of this session so far are down there this week in that house, in the House and then Senate.

- **SJO PROFERA**
  SJO is our serious juvenile offender units. We have one unit in the division that is very short staffed. I have 13 positions and three officers. They are the lowest paid officers in the state. So, they have to try to get their wage increase. We're on time for negotiations right now. So hopefully theirs will get an increase. But I have two supervisors that are in this unit: one that's the intelligence of law enforcement side and one that's supposed to be over electronic monitoring 24/7 apprehension unit. But he has not been able to do that at all because I can't staff this unit, they are not unionized, and their salaries are low. Step by the merit system and we've asked appealing for increases with no movement. Basically, PROFERA is the name of the bill, police and firefighters, police officers, I mean members. It's in that something act basically it allows anyone in the law enforcement agency to be protected by. That bill was passed a few years ago. So, our two supervisors in the actual union are also not union protected because they forgot about that in the bill. So, in the initial bill, we are calling for a cleanup bill to get them added. Senate Griffin filed this bill for us because they need to be included in that before they can get unionized wages. Hopefully I can get these salaries right so I can staff this unit to be able to assist.

- **Private Detention Bill**
  Representative Matt Gorman sponsored a bill to ban private detention facilities in Delaware. One facility is in Newark right now. We closed the Milford one in November, based on our populations. So, we asked for a carve out for the one facility which we thought we would be good with, and people are not happy with this either. So, we will continue to run detention as we know it now. There just won't be that opportunity. So, to me you either go to detention, or you go home for the two opportunities. There are 10 beds, there's eight total youth, two girls, six boys. Eventually this will be closing

Probation Updates:

Chief Bruncsak advised the closure of the contractor with DSRC downstate. They were providing low levels of provision. The case on attorney's truancy court and the bonus court. We had some a few firms about the quality of their service. We really decided to coach and support them through last year to get them up to the standard unsuccessfully. And so, we gave them 60-day notice that we were going to close our contract. Caseloads in the unit are 600 is on probation from pretrial to the end. Work was manageable. They're doing good work.

Open Discussion