



State of Minnesota
Minnesota Department of Corrections
Office of the Commissioner

December 21, 2001

TO: Patrick E. Flahaven, Secretary of the Senate
Edward A. Burdick, Chief Clerk
Robbie LaFleur, Director, Legislative Reference Library

Subject: REPORT ON GOALS OF COURT-ORDERED PLACEMENT, MN Laws
1999,
Chap. 216, Art. 6, Sec. 13

The 1999 Minnesota Legislature charged the commissioners of Corrections and Human Services to file, on January 15 of each year, a “Report on Goals of Court-ordered Out-of-Home Placements” detailing the extent to which the goals of court-ordered out-of-home placements are being met. This brief summary is our report for calendar year 2001.

The 1999 legislature also requested that the chief justice of the Supreme Court convene a task force on juvenile out-of-home placement goals. The task force was required to (1) develop a uniform list of possible out-of-home placement goals for juvenile court dispositions from which judges could select when complying with state law and, (2) identify steps required to be taken by state agencies to collect and report summary information on the achievement of these goals. The task force shall specify which agencies should collect the information and identify costs related to collecting it.

The first charge to the Supreme Court, that of developing a uniform list of possible goals, was met by the activities of the Juvenile Services Task Force of the Supreme Court. Implementation of the second charge hinges on the outcomes of two Supreme Court pilot projects and the court’s plan for further statewide application of the service outcome and goals model.

The Supreme Court charged their Juvenile Justice Services Task Force with the task of identifying gaps and overlaps in existing services and developing model protocols for providing services statewide.

The task force was also asked to develop outcome goals that identify the results that services should achieve and ideas to promote improved collaboration by service providers and system professionals.

With input from statewide focus groups, five pilot counties and experts in the field, the task force determined that no single model for services would work when applied on a statewide basis. Service needs were seen as varying too greatly among the 87 counties, as did the

ability to coordinate services and to use one menu of specific outcome goals to measure results. What was needed, the task force concluded, was a broader framework.

The Supreme Court Task Force recommended that counties develop their own comprehensive continuum of services, which can be matched with community goals and needs. The task force adopted “model service protocols” that begin by identifying the outcome goals the community wants to achieve. The local goals are intended to be developed collaboratively—with input from families, youth, service providers, and professionals working with youth in each county.

The task force report states that “Individual needs of juveniles will be assessed and an outcome-driven case dispositional process will be implemented. Each service provider will report on the outcome goals its services are intended to accomplish. The Juvenile Justice System will monitor whether the service provider outcome goals are accomplished.”

Eight service outcome goals were adopted to provide a framework for statewide use. The suggested goals are intended to guide the service delivery within the juvenile justice system. They include:

- § Youth live law-abiding lives;
- § Youth take responsibility and repair the harm they have done to victims;
- § Youth are accountable to the community as a consequence of their conduct;
- § Youth have supportive and positive relationships with adults and other youth within their community;
- § Youth are involved and recognized for their involvement, in positive leisure and recreational activities;
- § Youth experience educational success;
- § Youth have age-appropriate living and social skills and habits;
- § Youth are physically and mentally healthy.

The task force also developed both program-level and individual-level sample indicators with which to measure progress toward meeting the service outcome goals. For example, one indicator for measuring whether youth live law-abiding lives is whether there is a new offense. An indicator for whether they have taken responsibility for the harm they’ve done is whether they’ve paid their restitution in full. The Task Force provided a listing of sample indicators in their report.

The balanced framework approach developed by the court and the service outcome goals and indicators represent a stride forward in having a coherent statewide approach for service delivery to our juvenile population.

The Supreme Court is currently piloting its model services protocol in two counties and will be evaluating the effectiveness of the model and whether the goals of services and placements are being achieved as measured by the indicators developed by the pilot counties.

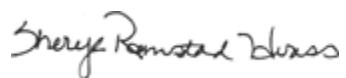
The Supreme Court Task Force report notes, “..the effort to systematically use outcome

indicators to judge the effectiveness of services has just begun. To judge the effectiveness of services, service outcome goals must be set and indicators of progress tracked to determine how services change the lives and behavior of youth."

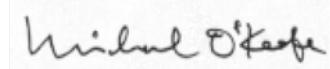
There is not one information system that is systematically collecting statewide outcome indicator data from each locality on its service outcomes. In order to have statewide reporting capacity on the effectiveness of court-ordered services and placements for juveniles, there would have to be statewide implementation of the goals and common indicators, and those goals and indicators would have to be collected by, or reported to, an information system. The Supreme Court will base any expansion of their protocol on the results of the tests in the two pilot counties.

We recommend that the responsibility for filing this annual report shift from the Departments of Corrections and Human Services to the Supreme Court in future years, since this mandate deals specifically with juvenile dispositional outcomes that are ordered by the courts.

Sincerely,



Sheryl Ramstad Hvass
Commissioner
Department of Corrections



Michael O'Keefe
Commissioner
Department of Human Services