



OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
Contributing to a Safer Minnesota

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To: Patrick Flahaven, Secretary of the Senate
Albin Mathiowetz, Chief Clerk of the House
Robbie LaFleur, Director, Legislative Reference Library
Dennis Skrade, Minnesota State Law Library

The 1999 Minnesota Legislature charged the commissioners of Corrections and Human Services to file, in January 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 (Minnesota Laws 1999, Chapter 216, art. 6, §13). This is our report for calendar year 2005.

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 M.S. §260B.241; 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 in 2001 by the activities of the Juvenile Services Task Force of the Supreme Court. The original Task Force did not specify what steps are required by state agencies to collect and report summary information, deciding instead to leave those issues to the agencies and persons responsible for developing the automated statewide outcome indicator data from each locality on its service outcomes.

As indicated in previous annual reports, 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 use one menu of specific outcome goals to measure results. What was needed, the Task Force concluded, was a broader framework.



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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 by the Task Force 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.

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

As indicated in previous reports, the State Court Administrator’s Office piloted the model services protocol in two counties. The pilot programs are now completed. Both pilot sites (Scott and Beltrami Counties) continue their efforts even though the original grant funding has expired. At this time the pilots have not been expanded statewide.

It should be noted that at this time there continues to be no centralized 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. Until legislative initiatives are developed and approved addressing these barriers and sufficient funding is appropriated for an informational system, the reporting and collection of meaningful data related to court-ordered services and the placement of juveniles will not be realized.

As has been recommended in our previous reports to the legislature, both the Department of Corrections and Department of Human Services would again recommend that the filing of this annual report be discontinued until such time that a statewide system of out-of-home placement goals and common indicators becomes operative and that an information system to collect and receive such data is funded and established.

Sincerely,

/s/

Joan Fabian
Commissioner
Department of Corrections

/s/

Kevin Goodno
Commissioner
Department of Human Services