

# Major Mental Health Service Expansion for Youth in Brooklyn

Collaborative Effort Announced by NYS Offices of Mental Health and Children and Family Services

Press Release, NYS Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services, Albany, NY

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The New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) and the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) today announced a comprehensive solution to address the chronic need for community-based mental health alternatives in Brooklyn for children and their families, and the lack of intensive residential treatment in New York City for court-involved youth with mental health problems. Plans announced today will:

- greatly expand community-based mental health treatment options and services for children in Brooklyn, improve early access to quality mental health care for children and their families, and avoid the disruption to families caused by the overuse of institutional care;
- provide intensive residential treatment in New York City for court-involved youth with mental health problems, thus avoiding the disruption to families caused by their transfer to upstate facilities; and
- expand mental health service capacity in other boroughs of New York City.

This investment is made possible through the reconfiguration of OMH services and the shift of OMH and OCFS resources.

**Michael F. Hogan, PhD, OMH Commissioner said,**

*"This is a bold collaboration that will dramatically improve mental health care for children and youth in New York. We will create a first-of-its-kind state run comprehensive mental health center for children and families that will help 600 children annually and the first Residential Treatment Facility (RTF) in New York State dedicated to youth in the juvenile justice system with major mental health needs. Without these efforts, many children would be hospitalized or go without care, and many youth who need treatment would be incarcerated. These programs will serve as a foundation for improved mental health care and for juvenile justice reform."*

**Gladys Carrión, Esq., OCFS Commissioner, said,**

*"The collaboration between OCFS and OMH is a ground-breaking first step in providing much-needed intensive mental health residential treatment for youth in New York's juvenile justice system. As we transform the juvenile justice system, we continually look for ways to increase access to mental health care for youth in the juvenile justice system. With this residential treatment facility, youth will at last receive the treatment they sorely need to address their illness and to lead productive lives upon return to the community."*

The plan announced today consists of three major initiatives. It will:

- Establish a new OMH-operated comprehensive children's mental health center that will serve more than 600 children in Brooklyn. This new center will offer state of the art community mental health programs including clinic services, counseling and family therapy, community-based brief crisis care for youth, intensive day treatment and family and home-based support. Located at Brooklyn Children's Center, these expanded services will be provided by OMH employees who currently provide inpatient hospital services to 36 children at the Center.

- Establish an OMH-licensed Residential Treatment Facility (RTF-JJ) for adolescents from New York City who are involved in the juvenile justice system and have serious mental health problems. Currently, many of these children are far from home in upstate facilities. The new 24-bed RTF-JJ will be located on the current campus of Brooklyn Children's Center, in a distinct space separate from the outpatient mental health programs.
- Expand children's mental health services in other boroughs of New York City. It will create a new State-operated mental health clinic at Bronx Children's Psychiatric Center, serving 250 children; and expand intensive case management services in Queens and in the Bronx. It will also add eight beds at Bronx Children's Psychiatric Center, add two beds at Queens Children's Psychiatric Center, and add two beds at South Beach Psychiatric Center on Staten Island.

Implementation of this plan is expected to begin in Summer 2011 and phase-in will occur over a three-year period.

**Jeremy Travis, Chairperson of Governor Paterson's Task Force on Transforming Juvenile Justice, said,**

*"This investment in community-based resources is a welcome component of the state's efforts to overhaul the New York juvenile justice system. Consistent with the recommendations of the Governor's Task Force, these new mental health treatment services will keep young people closer to their communities, thereby improving public safety and enhancing the chances these youth will lead productive lives."*

**Jennifer March-Joly, Executive Director of the Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Inc., said,**

*"CCC applauds OMH and OCFS for coming together to expand community based mental health treatment for children and youth. The plan will enable many more children and youth to receive the community based mental health services that they need and will also ensure that youth in the juvenile justice system receive mental health treatment in a facility close to home. This collaboration is a win-win for children, youth, families and New York's taxpayers."*

**Giselle Stolper, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Mental Health Association of New York City, said,**

*"This expansion of community based mental health alternatives in Brooklyn brings the city and state closer to realizing the Children's Plan goal of being able to make sure that children and youth have access to the right service, at the right time and in the right amount. The planned intensive residential treatment services for court involved youth will fill a particularly large service gap."*

**Euphemia Strauchn, FDC, MSW, Chief Executive Officer of Families on the Move in New York City, said**

*"This is a perfect example of the systems change that we have been talking about for many years. Families have long advocated for movement in this direction - the need for quicker and better access to community based mental health services, services that are provided closer to our homes and communities, while at the same time developing a truly integrated system of*

*care. This change presents a wonderful opportunity for youth and families to work with our government partners to create a service system that can really make a difference in our lives."*

The expansion announced today is responsive to the goals of New York State's The Children's Plan. Published in October 2008, The Children's Plan was developed with input from thousands of New Yorkers and endorsed by all of New York's child-serving agencies. It recommends the proactive involvement of all stakeholders to intervene earlier, improve access to care, shift resources toward community-based services and improve the quality of service provision and delivery.