

**MINUTES**  
**MORRIS COUNTY YOUTH SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (YSAC)**  
**This meeting was held at 1 Medical Drive**  
**February 20, 2025**

The meeting was called to order by David Johnston at 9:17 am.

**Members present:**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Present</b>
Holly Dinney	Family Promise of Morris County	
Maria Augustowicz	Caring Partners CMO	X*
Ingrid Vaca-Bullaro	Center for Family Services	X*
Diane Womer	Morris Child Placement Review Board	
Beth Jacobson	NewBridge Services, Inc.	
Diana Cirillo		
Maddie Hahn	Jersey Battered Women's Service	
Patricia Houston	Family Support Organization	
Jackie Looby	Cornerstone Family Programs	X
Neville Newton	Plaid House	
Barbara Kauffman	Morris County Prevention Is Key	X*
Robert Peluso	Township of Parsippany-Troy Hills	X*
Margaret Pittaluga (Co-Chair)	Center For Evaluation and Counseling	
David Johnston (Chair)	Deirdre's House	X
Natalie Roca	Juvenile Justice Commission	X
Amy Archer	Dept. of Human Services	X
Cindy Cuenca	Morris County Probation Services	X*
Jill Cerullo	Morris County Youth Shelter/JDC	X
Sandra Gogerty	Morris County Dept. of Education	
Mackensie Fosko	Dept. of Human Services	X
Kim Johnson	Morris/Sussex/Warren ETS and the Workforce Development Board	X*
Leena George	DCP&P County Services Specialist	X
Nichole Balestrino	Morris County Family Juvenile Intake Unit	X*
Christine Myers	County Commission Liaison	
Kasey Errico	Dept. of Human Services	X
Laura Siemonsma-Bertelli	Morris County Sheriff's Office	X*
Jeena Williams	DCP&P Team Leader	X*
Samantha DeNegri	Morris County Prosecutors Office	X
Hon. Michael Paul Wright	Morris County Judiciary – Juvenile Judge	
Ana Tent	Morris County Office of the Public Defender	

**Guests Present:**

<b>Guest</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Present</b>
Jessica Raczyk	Big Brothers Big Sisters	X*
Allison Spanger	Center for Evaluation & Counseling	X
Tracey Skop	Morris County Probation Services	X*
Tisha Mender	Roots and Wings	X*
Elise Bryant		X*
Lawanda Lewis	CSOC	X
Gloria Correa	Creating Change	X
Elizabeth Nuss	DCP&P	X

\*Attended virtually

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Tabled

**PRESENTATIONS**

Elizabeth Nuss, DCP&P Morris/Sussex Resource Family Recruiter, presented to the YSAC on DCP&P's Office of Resource Families. The Office of Resource Families is focusing on kin families and keeping individuals who are related to one another together. 85 per cent of children served by DCF are living at home with their families, and the primary reason for removal is if there is an imminent risk of harm or danger.

Until reunification is possible, the children are medically cleared and placed. The first choice for placement is a family relative or friend. When not possible, DCP&P looks for foster families/resource care, and, lastly, foster care with interest in adoption, or adoptive families. Many adoptive families are interested in infants, making it difficult to find adoptive families for older youth or children with complex needs.

Ms. Nuss was asked what training foster parents receive and what one can expect when trying to obtain a New Jersey license. It is a virtual month-long training with a live trainer. The classes are usually two days a week at night. There are also Saturday classes available for those who cannot attend during the week. It does not teach an individual how to be a parent, but rather about the system, such as how to deal with loss, discipline, and how to work with a birth family. Ms. Nuss was further asked if they offer trainings in Spanish, and she responded that they do offer trainings in Spanish and are in need of more Spanish-speaking families.

**ACTION ITEMS****Chair Report**

David Johnston discussed how to better serve the community and different ways to acquire data and reports.

Jeena Williams stated that CSOC distributes monthly data dashboards, which provide a general overview of the region. She offered her help to obtain information on a regular basis. Ms. Williams also

mentioned that it may be helpful to restart systems review meetings. There was also a suggestion to hold combined meetings between Sussex and Morris County.

Kim Johnson added that she would be open to providing a report from the Workforce Investment Board.

## **STATE AND COUNTY REPORTS**

### **Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC)**

Ms. Roca reported the following statewide statistics comparing 2023-2024:

Commitments overall increased by 53.5 percent

Commitments for waived youth decreased by 9.1 percent

Probationer referrals increased by 12.1 percent

The combined total for commitments, waivers, and probationers increased by 16.3 percent

Discussion ensued on whether data accurately reflects the reality of the situation.

### **Probation**

Tracey Skop reported that they have 56 youth - 20 on formal probation, 36 on deferred disposition.

### **Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P)**

Leena George reported the following statistics:

Morris East: CWS 18 CPS 101 Total 119

Breakdown: 20 Spanish Speaking; 0 Unhoused; 26 Domestic Violence; 16 Substance Use; 7 Sexual Assault; 1 Child on Child; 0 Unaccompanied Minor

Morris West: CWS 16 CPS 95 Total 106

Breakdown: 25 Spanish Speaking; 0 Unhoused; 13 Domestic Violence; 26 Substance Use; 10 Sexual Assault; 0 Child on Child; 0 Unaccompanied Minor

County Total – 225 CWS Total 34 CPS Total 196

Ms. George stated that Child on Child sexual abuse numbers have gone down due to the implementation of their Problematic Sexual Behaviors (PSB) program. Prior to the program, the calls were being made for abuse or neglect to DCP&P, but they are now being deferred to the PSB program. If, however, there is an instance where sexual behavior is suggested to be the result of abuse from an adult, the Division will become involved.

Mr. Johnston asked where the funding for the PSB program comes from in Morris County. Ms. George responded that it comes from DCF funding.

Ingrid Vaca-Bullaro asked if DCF follows up with the families after they are referred to see if they received the services and are actively engaged in the treatment. Discussion took place regarding the need for follow-up in case the children re-offend at an older age where they can then be charged.

The YSAC went on to discuss, in greater detail, the importance of accurate data. It was mentioned that most of the programs for the treatment of PSB or substance use for adolescents are voluntary. Therefore, while occurrences of these cases are being documented, families will sometimes decline services or elect

to place their child in a private treatment program. The insufficient data also suggests that there are no cases, and this can result in a lack of funding being allocated towards treatment, as described by Mr. Johnston.

Jeena Williams stated that the specialized services coordinator (SCC), who is making the referrals, could possibly break down the data into how many referrals are made in Morris County, how many individuals are accepting services, and where the referrals are being sent. Ms. Vaca-Bullaro added that the Center for Family Services (CFS) addresses PSB in adolescents, whereas the Center for Evaluation and Counseling (CEC) addresses PSB in younger children. Therefore, CEC may receive more referrals than CFS.

### **Department of Children and Families (DCF)**

Ms. Williams stated that there is a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) on the DCF website. It is for providers who can offer summer camp and alternative recreational services for youth with developmental and intellectual disabilities who are served by the children's system of care. Responses for the RFQ are due by February 26, 2025.

There is a corresponding RFQ for one-to-one support for youth in the programs. If anyone is interested in identifying themselves as a potential agency, they can find the full request on the website.

Maria Augustowicz added that there is a need for providers for summer camps for this population because many families have to travel out of county for programs.

Elise Bryant asked if they considered the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Maria Augustowicz responded that they know of the Scout camps, but they must be qualified through CSOC to receive financial assistance.

### **Youth Services Coordinator Report**

Amy Archer mentioned that at the last Mental Health Administrators State Meeting, there was a presentation through DCF about Project Connect. Its purpose is to connect youth, that have been screened and determined safe to discharge by a hospital, with community services within two business days of discharge. Project Connect is currently in five hospital systems and have served 50 families.

Sign-ups for subcommittees are expected to be active starting in March. Once they are running, they will become a part of the agenda for reports.

The Division of Community and Behavioral Health Services (C&BHS) sent out an e-mail to all funded providers asking them to submit information regarding how they would be impacted by any potential changes to federal funding.

C&BHS is working to send out weekly e-mails to a distribution list rather than send out flyers immediately upon receiving them to lessen the volume of e-mails agencies receive from the county.

### **Leadership Advisory**

The Leadership Advisory Committee is expected to meet in late Spring.

### **Stigma Free**

The next Stigma Free Initiative meeting will be held Tuesday, May 13, 2025 at 1:30 PM via WebEx.

### **Juvenile Detention Center/Youth Shelter/Smartlink**

Jill Cerullo reported that the Juvenile Detention center has 8 males, 1 from Atlantic, 1 from Cumberland, and 1 from Mercer. There are none from Morris.

The Youth Shelter has 3 males, 1 from Hunterdon, and 2 from Passaic.

There are no youth in Smartlink and there have been none since September 2024.

### **JDAI**

Amy Archer stated that they received their approval letter. All documents were submitted and are now pending the executed contract from the state in order to be able to publish the RFP for the different services approved under JDAI.

### **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

Ms. Fosko stated that the subcommittee sign-up survey was distributed in January. She will follow up via e-mail to ensure that everyone who would like to participate has been accounted for.

### **NEW BUSINESS/GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Vaca-Bullaro announced that Active Parenting will be starting on March 4, 2025. It is an in-person parenting group for Spanish-speaking families and will take place at Excellence Family Success center in Dover on Tuesdays from 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for March 20, 2025 at 9:00 am.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

At approximately 11:12 am, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Louise Lichtenberg  
Administrative Professional, CBHS