

Monmouth County Youth Services Commission

Agenda for Tuesday June 3, 2025

4:00 PM First Floor Conference Room,

Human Services Building with Zoom Link Option Available

Attendance: Honorable Lourdes Lucas, Prosecutor Raymond Santiago, Achille Dejean, Brendan Ward, Carlton Cummings, Chanta Jackson, Christine Talbot, Desiree Whyte, Doug Hoffman, Dustin Knoblauch, Ivan Kaplan, Jennifer Hoffer, Kathleen Peterson, Kaitlyn Silagyi, Laurie Gerhardt, Lynn Seaward, Myra Carter, Shannon Oreficé, Stephanie Cella, and Tom Fichter.

I. CALL TO ORDER: OPEN PUBLIC MEETING’S ACT Prosecutor Santiago

Welcome and Introductions

Approval of YSC Minutes from April 1, 2025 (Action)

A motion was made, seconded and carried (Peterson: Knoblauch) to approve the Youth Services Commission Meeting Minutes from April 1, 2025.

II. YSC Co-Chairs Report

Prosecutor Raymond Santiago / Honorable Lourdes Lucas

No immediate updates. Chairs did recognize the work of the YSC, including the Planning Committee and Monitoring Committee in Ellen’s absence.

III. Division of Child and Youth Services Report Dustin Knoblauch

Children’s Interagency Coordinating Council (CIACC) – Heavy focus on Early Developmental Milestones; toolkit for parents to navigate questions and concerns are being presented and distributed. Strong emphasis on the I/DD population and helping families navigate. Mobile Response Stabilization Services (MRSS) to expand services to 0-3 population. Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day was an incredible success, serving nearly 330 families. Several partners to thank for volunteering their time to bring such a nice day to youth and families. The next general meeting is 6/18 @ 10am, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). **Youth Behavioral Health Contracts** – Site visits completed and finalizing reporting. Continued effort to work with contracted agencies to prioritize services based on critical needs to efficiently spend funding. **Education and Outreach** – Youth Service Presentations provided to

three districts since April; partners included: Division/Child Family Crisis Clinicians/Mobile Response/Family Crisis Intervention Unit/DCP&P/CMO etc. An I/DD presentation was provided to a school system. Division facilitated the Children's Panel of providers at the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training for Law Enforcement. **Positive Youth Development (PYD) Hub** – Awaiting date confirmation for the gang related training. Topics to include: Gang Awareness/Sextortion/Human Trafficking/Social Media. Next meeting – July 11th @ 10am via Zoom.

Asbury Park Community Feedback – Desiree Whyte

- Safe and Free Places - Unaware of resources/services. Would like more safe spaces and exposure outside of Asbury Park. Older kids need more services/activities to engage with. Several referenced the previous Westside Community Center as being a safe and free place for youth and adults. Sports offer a safe space but are limited to specific times throughout the year. There is interest in financial empowerment: would like to learn to manage, invest, and grow income. A need for work exposure opportunities.
- Family Empowerment and Engagement - There is a lack of supervision and parenting and an ask for role models/trusted adults/mentors from the community itself. Race and gender noted as important, but youth referenced the need for the right person; qualities include good listeners, non-judgmental, and honest. Relationship building is key in understanding attachment and consistency. There is a reported uprising in teen pregnancy, which is likely related to a lack of love and connection.
- Marketing is important. Mental health should not be directly referenced for services due to strong stigma. Perception – “I’m not crazy. I just have a lot on my mind.” Substance use is an issue and starting at young ages. Lean is popular with the older kids.
- Overall issue of violence, which is amplified by social media. “Not like back in the day when you got into a fight and moved on. Now it’s an ongoing feud on social media. Kids get insulted and embarrassed. They get a gun to prove themselves, demanding respect and attention.”

IV. YSC Administrator’s Update

Dustin Knoblauch

Ellen continues to be on extended leave.

V. Family Division - Court Processing Update

Tara Buckley

No major updates. The unit has welcomed a new staff member, Jessica Cannon to the Family Division.

VI. Probation Update

Myra Carter

The unit has built a successful juvenile justice intern program. Probation will host a job fair this evening. There will be a Commencement Ceremony this summer. Caseloads continue to increase. For the Gun Violence Reduction Initiative (GVRI): 9 juvenile cases total/7 of the 9 completed successfully/2 current cases. Probation plans to host more programming supported by IEP Youth Services. Myra referenced an interest in the Credible Messengers Program; directed to Project HEAL and Atlantic County contact for further information. Probation is interested in the upcoming Positive Youth Development (PYD) Hub, Gang Awareness Training. One of last year's trainees will be speaking to Probation later this month. Dustin shared that the PYD Hub Work Group is confirming a date and location; the training to be similar to last year based on positive feedback. Dustin will share the information with the group.

VII. Overview Presentations

➤ **Psychiatric Emergency Screening Services (PESS) – Douglas Hoffman**

Child Family Crisis Clinician (CFCC) Program – Psychiatric Emergency Screening Services (PESS) 732-923-6999; Doug Hoffman – PESS Director. CFCC provides in-community assessments in an effort to divert youth from Emergency Departments. This is a **free** service to schools, youth, and families. *Doug emphasized that there is no Screening Law for children, and parental consent is necessary.

Child and Adolescent Crisis Diversion Program (CACDP) – Monmouth Medical Center; Jessica Maddern – Program Supervisor 732-922-2860. Modeled after the Early Intervention Support Services (EISS) program for adults. Minimal barriers to care access by providing inclusive programming in a single space. Youth accepted regardless of location, insurance, financial need, documentation status, etc. Provides short term stabilization services to include: biopsychosocial assessments, medication assessment, prescribing, and monitoring as appropriate, case management, family support, group support etc. Schools and families can refer.

➤ **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Coastal & Northern NJ - Shannon Oreficé & Brendan Ward**

Detailed presentation of YSC programming provided; information to be distributed via YSC email list. Funding supports school and community-based mentoring. While servicing the full county, school-based services include Asbury Park, Keansburg, Long Branch etc.; high school students are often Bigs to Littles within their community. There are also mentor work exposure programs, including a partnership with Hackensack Meridian.

BBBS has also partnered with Project HEAL Elevate to provide group services to youth enrolled.

Those interested in receiving a mentor/making a referral: <https://mentornj.org/need-a-big/>

Those interested in becoming a mentor: <https://mentornj.org/be-a-big/>

VIII. YSC Planning Committee

Trude Arnette

Previously requested information/data/stats have been collected, and the plan is nearly complete. YSC Plan to be shared with the Committee.

X. YSC Monitoring

Kathleen Peterson

Kathleen recognized the YSC Monitoring Team Members: Elizabeth Williams, Jennifer Hoffer, Trude Arnette, Tom Fichter, Dustin Knoblauch, and Carla Vreeland (University of Michigan Intern). The team completed their first site visit at New Hope; the agency's hard work was recognized with an emphasis on accessibility for Monmouth County youth. New Hope is also providing outpatient services to youth in schools through a DHHS grant, which was highlighted.

Remaining monitoring sites include: Wellspring for Prevention (6/9/25), YMCA of Greater Monmouth County (6/9/25), Big Brothers Big Sisters of Coastal & Northern NJ (6/23/25), IEP Youth Services (6/25/25), Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (6/25/25), Mental Health Association of Monmouth County (6/26/25), Prevention 1st of PBHG (6/30/25), Boys and Girls Club of Monmouth County (7/24/25).

XI. New Business N/A

XII. Old Business N/A

XIII. Public Comment N/A

XIV. Adjournment- The next meeting of the Monmouth County Youth Services Commission is scheduled for Monday, August 4, 2025, at 4:00 PM.