

# Massachusetts Alliance of Juvenile Court Clinics

Adolescent Consultation Services • Behavioral Health Network • The Brien Center

Children's Friend and Family • Community Healthlink • Justice Resource Institute

Massachusetts General Hospital • Roxbury Youthworks

## **Increased Juvenile Court Clinic Funding for FY2009**

**Goals: Additional funding in FY2009 of \$814,000 to reach \$2 Million needed to increase capacity and add new referral/liaison services to create linkages for improved outcomes.**

1. **Sustain specially trained staff for the Juvenile Court Clinics.** The majority of the funding appropriated in FY07 and FY08 was required to maintain the existing level of service for the Juvenile Court. The Clinics focused on retaining experienced clinicians with the capacity to do highly specialized forensic evaluations and follow-up for the Court. The \$2 Million funding request for FY09 includes the maintenance of the gains made with the \$1.186 Million appropriated in FY08:
  - **Retention of committed, highly trained clinicians.** Continue the salary increases that were provided to specially trained clinicians, making it possible to retain staff who otherwise would have left for better paying positions at DYS, DMH, DSS, or the Adult Court Clinics. The new funding brings the Juvenile Court Clinic staff closer to what their counterparts in the adult clinics earn. The Juvenile Court Clinics must continue to seek increased funding from the Legislature to achieve salary parity with adult District Court clinicians.
  - **Filling vacant positions.** The Juvenile Court Clinics were able to fill clinical positions, which had remained vacant due to low salaries.
  - **Expanding capacity.** A few expansion positions have been funded to fill particularly large gaps in the Juvenile Court Clinic coverage. Additional new positions are required to increase the number of clients the Juvenile Court Clinics can serve and to increase liaison, follow-up, and treatment services.
  
2. **Identify the children and adolescents with mental health and substance abuse problems who are not receiving treatment or for whom treatment is ineffective.** Over 60 % of the children and adolescents involved with the Juvenile Courts face a combination of mental health and behavioral problems, medical issues, substance abuse, learning disabilities, and cultural issues.
  - Data from DMH and the Juvenile Court shows that in FY2005 and FY2006, prior to any increase in funding, the Juvenile Court Clinics saw less than 11% of these children. The Juvenile Court Clinics need additional resources to evaluate children and adolescents with mental health and substance abuse problems, including those who are not receiving treatment or for whom treatment is ineffective.
  - Assist court-involved clients involved in the Child Behavioral Health Initiative (formerly known as Rosie D. implementation) to obtain appropriate services that help them stabilize in their communities when possible and avoid further court involvement.
  
3. **Hire additional clinical staff to do essential referral, liaison, and advocacy work.** All of the Clinics throughout the Commonwealth have found that their interventions are more effective when they can do additional referral, liaison and advocacy work to ensure that the evaluation recommendations are implemented. The efficacy of this has been demonstrated by the Middlesex County post-evaluation service pilot program: Positive Outcomes from this program demonstrate that additional investment in individual clients pays off with benefits for these vulnerable children and families as well as improved safety in our communities:
  - 82% of the children evaluated who received the continued clinical follow-up tracking were participating in recommended treatment or services.
  - 89% were attending school, alternative education, or working.
  - 88% of the parents or family members were demonstrating active involvement in their child's treatment.