



To: Directors and Administrators, Public Agencies

From: Kara B. Wentze, Director
Ohio Department of Children and Youth

Date: January 17, 2024

Re: Public Children Services Agencies (PCSA) 2 to 5 year congregate placement review

As communities continue to build capacity to care for children and youth with complex needs, Ohio has implemented a number of initiatives aimed at increasing supports, including but not limited to OhioRISE and Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTF), the continued development of tiered foster care and Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) beds for youth with intensive behavioral health needs. While these initiatives are ongoing, there is an immediate need to develop additional supports to ensure all children and youth requiring out of home placement have an appropriate placement to meet their needs. It is critical that additional solutions deliver near-term support while contributing to the progress of longer-term capacity-building initiatives. It is the intent of the State of Ohio that no child sleep at a local government agency or wait in a hospital with no access to treatment due to lack of appropriate placement or treatment.

Through the collaborative conversation and diligent work of the Children Services Placement Workgroup, a comprehensive data review of children and youth currently placed in congregate care settings was identified as a potential short-term solution. This is not only to better understand the magnitude of the need for this level of care, but also, the characteristics of the children and youth needing placement. This data review will include collaborating with Public Children Services Agencies (PCSA) and other strategic local and state partners in an attempt to begin to transition youth from congregate care to lower levels of care (whenever safe and appropriate). The hope is that with the goal of congregate care utilization occurring at the right time and at the right dose for children and youth, congregate care beds will become available for those children and youth that need treatment stays. It is important to note that this is only one effort to assist with the placement concerns and will need to be done in conjunction with a full array of additional solutions.

Data Review Process

On November 7, 2023, a “master list” of data was pulled by the Ohio Department of Children and Youth (DCY) from Ohio SACWIS identifying children and youth in the custody of their local PCSA who are currently placed in congregate care. This list is also being compared with Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) data to obtain as much information as possible about these children and youth, especially in relation to OhioRISE and work with Ohio’s Managed Care Organizations (MCOs).



Children and youth placed in congregate care 2-5 years will be prioritized for initial review by the Ohio Department of Children and Youth (DCY) placement team.

The list, and all compiled information, will be broken down by PCSA, and sent to each respective county Director, no later than February 2, 2024. The list will contain children and youth in an Excel spreadsheet, with columns identified for information that the PCSA must complete and return by April 5, 2024, to DCY. This information will include:

1. Relative and non-relative kin contacted for potential placement and result of that contact. This can be as simple as an aggregate summary of the number of relatives/non-relative kin that have been contacted to date.
2. A brief synopsis of the discharge plan and any challenges/opportunities for transitioning from congregate care.
3. Resolution – in this situation, the PCSA may achieve transition of the child or youth prior to sending back data to DCY and would simply note that for the DCY team.

A state care team will be assembled, to include, but not be limited to, the PCSA (who informs state care team as to the best way to incorporate youth and family voice in planning), the residential or group home facility, OhioRISE Care Management Entity representative, Aetna representative, Managed Care Organization representative/s, and the Ohio Departments of Children and Youth, Developmental Disabilities, Mental Health and Addiction Services, Medicaid and Youth Services as well as local Family and Children First Council, when appropriate.

Work will continue with each PCSA's list until a resolution has been achieved for each child or youth. Once all reviews have been completed, and all children and youth who can be safely transitioned to a less restrictive setting have been discharged, data/lessons learned will be reviewed and consideration given to next steps for ongoing review. Please note, we recognize that discharge is not appropriate for every child and youth, depending on their treatment and safety needs.

Informational Session Opportunity

An informational session will be held via Microsoft Teams on Monday, January 29, 2024, from 11:00am-12:00pm for PCSA Directors (or designee) where the DCY team will review the process and answer questions. A calendar invite will be sent to PCSA Directors.

Contact

If you have any questions, or would like more information, please contact Elisha R. Cangelosi at elisha.cangelosi@childrenandyouth.ohio.gov.