

# COUNTY PIP REDUCTION STRATEGIES AND ACTION STEPS DOCUMENT

**County: Bucks**

**County: Point of Contact:  
Lynne Rainey**

**Email Address: [ldrainey@co.bucks.pa.us](mailto:ldrainey@co.bucks.pa.us)  
Revised April 9, 2009**

## Strategy I:

Provide outcome/evidence based treatment services to youth and families.

### *Action Steps and Timeline:*

#### **Collaborate via Integrated Children Services Planning process to identify needs, develop programming and resources that address behavioral health treatment needs of youth; In Process**

- Bill Rufe, Deputy Chief JPO and Andrea Matsko, Managed Care Specialist for Children and Youth are members of The Bucks County Children's Coordination Committee which also includes representatives from the county MH/MR department, the Drug and Alcohol Commission, the county Behavioral Health Department, the county MCO (Magellan), a consumer advocate, and a community provider.
  - The primary objectives of this committee are to:
    - Increase community-based resources as alternatives to out-of-home placement
    - Have an equal partnership for providers and families in recovery plans
    - Decrease lengths of stay in RTF level of care
    - Establish a common philosophy regarding the use of out-of-home placements
    - Find and make available outcome/evidence based treatment services to youth and families.
      - A Request for Proposal (RFP) to provide Functional Family Therapy (FFT) was submitted to providers in February 2009 with a response date of 3/3/09. A review process will take place until 3/23/09, at which time a provider will be selected. The award will be made on 4/6/09 with an anticipated start-up date of July 2009 at the earliest or January 2010 at the latest.
      - Multi-dimensional Treatment Foster Care is an agenda item for the 3/3/09 meeting and will be an ongoing agenda item until a provider can be found to offer this service in Bucks County.

a. Multisystemic Therapy (MST)

Multisystemic Therapy (MST) is an intensive family and community based treatment for youths and their families. These youths present with serious antisocial behaviors and may be diagnosed as having Conduct Disorder or Impulse Control Disorder. Additionally, these behaviors are externalized/demonstrated in the community.

MST was brought in as an evidence-based service in July 2007. In 2008, 125 clients were served by MST (C&Y: 91; JPO: 34). During 2008, of the two MST teams (that included both C&Y and JPO youth) providing services, both teams showed low placement rates of 7.69% and 4.26% respectively subsequent to MST provision. Youth in out-of-home placement Level of Care will be prioritized for MST services as part of their discharge plan.

b. Functional Family Therapy (FFT)

A Request for Proposal (FFTP) to provide Functional Family Therapy (FFT) was submitted to providers in February 2009.

**RFP Timeline:**

February 4, 2009	RFP Package emailed to Magellan, Montgomery and Bucks County Providers
February 13, 2009	Notice of Intent to Bid Submission Deadline, 05:00 PM EST
February 18, 2009	Mandatory Bidder's teleconference
March 2, 2009	Proposal Submission Deadline, 4:00 PM EST
March 3, 2009	Proposals Distributed to RFP Review Team
March 23, 2009	RFP Review Team Meeting
April 6, 2009	Announcement of Successful Bidder
July 1, 2009	Program Start-Up

A fiscal review took place last week, and at this time, Community Solutions and Valley Youth House are both still viable options for the final selection. Both agencies will be invited to participate in a face-to-face interview the week of April 13<sup>th</sup> during which we will be able to follow up on the identified areas of strength and weakness. We are hopeful that after the interviews there will be a clear front runner who will be offered the contract. The other eight providers were sent an email letting them know that their proposal was not selected and that the final announcement will be made by the end of the month. Final interviews for both Community Solutions and Valley Youth House will take place on Thursday April 16<sup>th</sup> at 10:00-11:30 and from 1:00-2:30 at Magellan. Follow-Up Questions to Selected Provider.

1. How will the provider partner with Magellan Health Services, Bucks County Behavioral Health and Montgomery County Behavioral Health to identify and address specialized training needs that may arise with FFT youth and families?
2. How will Motivational Interviewing be used as a tool in treatment?
3. How will the provider partner with schools and other natural supports in the community as part of treatment?
4. How will the provider strengthen their crisis planning and risk assessment approaches with FFT?
5. What is the provider's plan for coordination of care and responsiveness to the FFT referral source?
6. How will the provider achieve competency in treating substance abuse and co-occurring disorders within the framework of FFT?
7. What is the provider's plan for assisting families in the MA application process and achieving MA eligibility?
8. How will the provider connect with families and youth referred to their FFT program- what form will outreach and continued contact take?

c. Multi-Dimensional Treatment Foster Care

In process of locating a provider of this service in Bucks County. NHS has invited placement staff to discuss this modality.

d. High Fidelity Wrap Around

The County has met with three (3) providers during week of 3/16/09 in regard to developing a plan for program implementation. Next meeting on 5/26/09. Discussions are in progress.

e. Models of Trauma Informed Care RFP

Trauma Screening Workgroup has been meeting and a screening tool, the UCLA PTSD Index, has been identified. Several providers have expressed interest in utilizing the tool and will be piloting the tool in their programs. A reinvestment proposal is being developed and will be submitted to the State for review/approval.

Three providers will pilot the screening tool: Family Based Services (Penn Foundation), Outpatient (Family Services Association), & Community Residential Rehab/Host Home (Penndel Mental Health/Elita House). These providers will report back to the Children's Coordination Committee on 5/26/09.

f. Items below are from Bucks County Children's Coordination Committee 2008 Accomplishments

- i. First D&A prevention (XSITE) and JPO/C&Y diversion (Options) reinvestment plans for Bucks County adolescents approved by the State
- ii. CCC collaborated on Robert Wood Johnson Grant for Liberian and Refugee Services.
- iii. Enhancement of respite through Child & Family Focus. State approves more reinvestment dollars for respite and a full time respite coordinator is hired by Bucks.
- iv. School based mental health services expanded to 8 schools through start up reinvestment dollars approved by the state. (Bensalem - Faust & Rush Schools -- MCC)

## Strategy II:

Increase family involvement in truancy prevention and interventions.

### *Action Steps and Timeline:*

**Address truancy through a coordinated county-wide Truancy Court that includes all Magisterial District Judges, the 13 school districts, and C&Y; In Process.**

- a. Committee formed May 2008 with oversight of Judge John J. Rufe.
  - Subsequent Meeting: June 2008, October 2008, March 2009, (6 Magisterial District Judge)
    - o Addressed: truancy, reporting practices, gaps in service, communication issues.
  - Workgroup: March 23, 2009 to address:
    - o Effective treatment/service interventions, feasibility of cross/district uniform reporting.
  - Next Meeting: May 2009.
  
- b. TRACK (Truancy Reduction and Curfew for Kids) Formed 1998. The TRACK initiative was started with the help of a JABG grant by the Juvenile Probation Office. Chief PO Ford organized the largest municipalities and school districts in Lower Bucks County into a coalition that focused on reducing truancy and day time delinquent crime. Municipalities passed "daytime curfew" laws that allowed police officers to stop school aged children during school hours to determine why they were not in school. Police could transport the juvenile back to the school, or issue a citation for violation of the daytime curfew. This initiative is still funded by JABG and more recently, from OJJDP grant funding. TRACK is a collaborative currently represented by seven (7) school districts, law enforcement, Juvenile Probation and Children & Youth, and various community agencies. The current funding provides for case management services to youth in four school districts. TRACK meets monthly and is geographically focused on Lower Bucks County.

### **Strategy III:**

Increase staff skills and knowledge in family oriented drug and alcohol interventions.

#### *Action Steps and Timeline:*

#### **Trainings with skill based curriculum; In Process**

- a. C&Y is collaborating with The Bucks County Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency to provide staff with monthly Drug & Alcohol trainings.
  - Trainings began in January 2009 and will continue throughout 2009.
- b. Use the forum of staff meetings to provide Drug & Alcohol information.
  - April 8, 2009 - Michael Frost, MD & alcoholism specialist will address staff.
  - May 2009 - The Bucks County Council on Alcoholism & Drug Dependency will provide staff with an overview of D & A services available to the client population.
- c. Cross Trainings with Libertae, a D&A treatment program in the county - contact Spring 2009.
- d. JPO Trainings:
  - On 1/5/09 all Bucks JPOs attended an in house training conducted by George Geisler, Eastern PA Law Enforcement Director of the Pennsylvania DUI Association on the topic of Major Indicators of Drug and Alcohol Impairment.
  - In April 2009, John Howell, Executive Director of Today, Incorporated will conduct an in-house training to all Bucks JPOs on the topic – Co-occurring Substance Abuse and Mental Health Disorders in Adolescents: Integrating Approaches for Assessment and Treatment of the Individual Young Person.
  - Bucks JPOs are routinely assigned to attend drug and alcohol trainings as part of their required annual 40 hours of professional training as those trainings become available.

#### **Strategy IV:**

Utilize the Integrated Children's Services Planning team to develop programs and recruit providers that will address parental addiction from a multi-disciplinary approach.

##### *Action Steps and Timeline:*

#### **a. Pursue research and RFP's for resource development;**

Start date 04/09

- i. On March 20, 2009, met with Bucks County Health & Human Services Director and Director of Bucks County Behavioral Health to discuss feasibility of utilizing Behavioral Health system for program development of D&A services to address the specific issues relevant to the C&Y population.
  - Investigate use of children's Medical Assistance eligibility/behavioral health funding to assist with drug and alcohol treatment from a team approach for a child's parents.
  
- ii. On April 3, 2009, C&Y Director met with D&A Commission Director and identified initial strategy to involve a local provider in a collaborative process of program development.
  - C&Y to identify specific needs for next meeting, in early May, that will include the provider.

**TOTAL CHILDREN IN PLACEMENT AS OF 4/8/09: 382**

**BREAKDOWN OF CHILDREN IN PLACEMENT BY SERVICES AND AGE GROUP DUE TO PARENTAL SUBSTANCE ABUSE: 118 (31%)**

<b>AGE GROUP: Under 1 Year</b>	<b>Total: 14</b>	<b>Percentage of total: 12%</b>
0 Months Open for Service before Placement:	<b>6</b>	<b>43% NO INHOME SERVICES</b>
Under 6 months Open for Service before Placement	4	28%
6-12 months Open for Service before Placement	2	14%
12-24 months Open for Service before Placement	1	7%
24-60 months Open for Service before Placement	1	7%
60+ months Open for Service before Placement	0	

<b>AGE GROUP: 1 - 4 Years</b>	<b>Total: 35</b>	<b>Percentage of total: 30%</b>
0 Months Open for Service before Placement:	<b>14</b>	<b>40% NO INHOME SERVICES</b>
Under 6 months Open for Service before Placement	6	23%
6-12 months Open for Service before Placement	7	20%
12-24 months Open for Service before Placement	4	11%
24-60 months Open for Service before Placement	4	11%
60+ months Open for Service		

before Placement	0	
------------------	---	--

<b>AGE GROUP: 5 - 11 Years</b>	Total: <b>46</b>	Percentage of total: <b>39%</b>
0 Months Open for Service before Placement:	<b>12</b>	<b>26% NO INHOME SERVICES</b>
Under 6 months Open for Service before Placement	19	41%
6-12 months Open for Service before Placement	7	15%
12-24 months Open for Service before Placement	5	11%
24-60 months Open for Service before Placement	3	7%
60+ months Open for Service before Placement	0	

<b>AGE GROUP: 12 -17 Years</b>	Total: <b>22</b>	Percentage of total: <b>19%</b>
0 Months Open for Service before Placement:	<b>9</b>	<b>41% NO INHOME SERVICES</b>
Under 6 months Open for Service before Placement	3	14%
6-12 months Open for Service before Placement	5	23%
12-24 months Open for Service before Placement	2	9%
24-60 months Open for Service before Placement	3	23%
60+ months Open for Service before Placement	0	

<b>AGE GROUP: 18+ Years</b>	Total: <b>1</b>	Percentage of total: <b>0%</b>
0 Months Open for Service before Placement:	<b>0</b>	<b>0% NO INHOME SERVICES</b>
Under 6 months Open for Service before Placement	1	100%
6-12 months Open for Service before Placement	0	
12-24 months Open for Service before Placement	0	
24-60 months Open for Service before Placement	0	
60+ months Open for Service before Placement	0	

## **Strategy V:**

Increase number of children in first time placement discharged from care to permanency within 12 months.

### *Action Steps and Timeline:*

**a. Implement Pennsylvania Permanency Initiative in Bucks County; Calendar year 2009**

- i. “Visitation to Permanency.” Program goal: to expedite permanency decisions within 6 months of placement.
- ii. Convene a workgroup with Bethanna staff to discuss implementation strategies through intensive engagement and goal oriented visitation.
- iii. Workgroup to convene Spring 2009 - Implementation July 1, 2009.
- iv. Submit formal application for Pennsylvania Perm Initiative funds to state - Spring 2009  
--Human Services Director met with President Judge on April 7, 2009, to discuss court’s willingness to participate..
- v. Meet with Angelo Santore on 4-23-08 to review fund application

**b. Utilize Children’s Roundtable for on-going development of innovative approaches to permanency; In Process**

**c. Introduce Court Improvement practices for permanency to court: In process**

- Pre-hearing conferences for contested goal change with parties except the judge.
- Purpose: Minimize continuances which result in delay of service delivery and reunification.
- Met with Juvenile Court judge on April 7, 2009, discussed concept of conferences and three-month reviews.

**d. Utilize internal Concurrent Planning Review process for all children in placement; In Place**

Review each placement case at a minimum of every 3 months.

Weekly reviews include supervisory and managerial staff.

**e. Educate legal community and C&Y staff on “Decision Making Process Within Child Welfare and Permanency Planning.”**

--Collaborative work group involving judges, attorneys, and C&Y directors. In process for purpose of convening a one-day conference on June 11, 2009.

## **Strategy VI:**

Increase number of families who participate in Family Group Decision Making Conferences.

### *Action Steps and Timeline:*

- a. **Provide additional resources for facilitated FGDM conferences;** In process

FGDM conference to occur on all new placement cases commencing: March 2009.

- Monitored by: Supervisors/Managers.
- FGDM conferences to be held on all Shared Case Responsibility cases.

- b. **Adding additional staff position to FGDM unit** – April 20, 2009

- c. **Include a purchase of service contract** to supplement C&Y FGDM in house program - Summer 2009

- d. **JPO Agenda:**

In 2009 Bucks JPO has set a goal for each of the four supervision units to refer one family per month to participate in an FGDM. If this goal is met, FGDM conferences would increase almost 5 fold from the previous year.

## **Strategy VII:**

Increase number of kinship placements.

### *Action Steps and Timeline:*

#### **a. Implement Family Finding practices and use of Accurint software; Calendar year 2009**

- i. Convene Family Finding Committee to plan implementation of Family Finding practices and use of Accurint Software - January 2009.
- ii. Identify Agency users - May 2009.
- iii. Implementation of Accurint - May 2009.
- iv. Family Finding Training - Fall 2009.
- v. Implement Fostering Connections to Success & Increasing Adoption Act provisions “Due Diligence”—to interview all household members prior to any placement - Ongoing  
Notification of all Relatives within thirty (30) days of any placements – Beginning April, 2009 and ongoing

#### **b. Increase Searches for Fathers and Birthfamily.**

- i. Train Staff on ISU’s search packet - June – Sept. 2009.
- ii. Implement policy preventing case transfer/closing without a diligent search.
- iii. Implement use of Accurint Software to locate fathers and birthfamily;
- iv. Develop protocols for use of Accurint Software

**Strategy VIII:**

Utilize Concurrent Planning for all children who are subjects of a dependency petition.

*Action Steps and Timeline:*

- a. **Advocate for development of concurrent planning conferences at time of shelter care order and before adjudicatory hearing;** Calendar year 2009
  - i. Access Child Welfare Training Program Practice Improvement Specialist for assistance

## **Strategy IX:**

Reduce length of time between petitions for TPR's and Adoption Finalizations.

### *Action Steps and Timeline:*

- a. **Utilize Paralegal to file petitions, handle SWAN submissions, coordinate adoptive family recruitment activities and schedule hearings; Calendar year 2009**
- b. **Reviewed 129 cases with goal of adoption; included representative from SWAN Completed 2/19/09.**
  - Continue review of cases with goal of adoption every 6 months
  - MDT to be held on two cases from review; implement MDT's as needed in future
  - Use any and all recruitment resources to obtain adoptive families for children who are not yet matched
  - Ensure birthparents obtain/receive legal representation prior to TPR hearing
  - While completing TPR court process, ensure adoptive parent home study is in process
  - Follow-up to ensure home study and associated documentation are completed
  - Once TPR decree is received (and there is no appeal) immediately file Intent to Adopt, Intermediary Report, Consent of Agency and adoptive parent home study
  - Follow-up to ensure that that adoption attorney has received finalization paperwork
  - Follow-up to ensure adoptive parents received and returned paperwork to attorney
  - Follow-up to confirm that an adoption finalization date is confirmed by Orphans' Court
  - All of the above action steps are ongoing
  - Obtain and utilize SWAN paralegal to file petitions, handle SWAN submissions, coordinate filing of adoption finalization legal paperwork, and expedite all paperwork (09/10 Budget)

## **Strategy X:**

Increase and renew caseworker knowledge and usage of community resources to assist families in accessing housing, treatment, employment, education, health care, etc. services.

### *Action Steps and Timeline:*

**a. C&Y participation in community resource coalitions and collaborations to engage with community for purposes of addressing needs and services for children, youth and families to prevent child abuse and issues of dependency in Bucks County; In Process**

- Maintain Agency representation on the following coalitions:
- County Best Practice Committee
- Truancy Reduction & Curfew for Kids (TRACK)
- Bucks County Truancy Committee (Co-Chair)
- Bucks Promise (Communities That Care)
- Bucks County Suicide Taskforce
- Safe & Drug Free Schools Committee
- Bristol Borough Community Partnership
- Bucks County Direct Service Coalition
- Youth Advisory Board (Regional/State)
- Human Services Housing Coalition
- Bucks County Youth Council
- Morrisville Community Collaborative
- Upper Bucks IU Interagency Meetings
- Helping Upper Bucks Be Universally Better (HUBBUB)
- SWAN Quarterly Meetings
- Delaware Valley Adoption Council
- Adoptee Search Committee

**b. Ensure that new workers attend annual Best Practices conference and participate in on-going provision of conference within the County of Bucks; In Process**

- New staff will attend New Employee Forum sponsored by the Best Practice Alliance (a collaboration of County Agencies) – April 2009.
- Staff will attend The Best Practice Annual Conference to foster collaborative relationships with other Agencies - Fall 2009.
- Staff will attend “Decision Making in the Child Welfare Process—Permanency for Kids”— June 11, 2009, collaborative conference among Bucks County Children & Youth, Bucks County Juvenile Court, Members of Bucks County Bar Association, Bucks County Office of the Guardian ad Litem, Bucks County Legal Aid. Nationally recognized expert, David Brodzinsky, Ph.D. will present on issues of children in foster placement through adoption finalization.

**c. Utilize Family to Family Service Team approach to geographical subdivisions within county; Late 2009**

- Maintain Family to Family Initiative Service Delivery Team in Lower Bucks County – In Place.
- Expand SDT to include consistent meetings and a formal referral process - Fall 2009.

## **Strategy XI:**

Reduce time between shelter care and adjudication hearings due to continuances.

*Action Steps and timeline:*

**Develop forum, an “Advocates Roundtable,” to discuss on-going issues with legal representatives of parents and children, judges, and C&Y; *Late Spring 2009***

- Develop forum, an “Advocates Roundtable,” to discuss on-going issues with legal representatives of parents and children, judges, and C&Y; *Late Spring 2009*
- Obtain data on length of current hearings, reasons for continuances, scheduling issues; *Ongoing*
- Present data to Agency Solicitors to identify areas that can be addressed to reduce delay; *Late Spring 2009*
- Collaborate with Court/attorneys on institution of parent conflict counsel (for those parents who are not eligible for Legal Aid)—*April 2009 and ongoing*
- Reduce any delays in parent attorney receipt of case information due to redaction, etc.

## **Strategy XII:**

Assure that youth are prepared with a life connection, income, and residence as a minimum standard before they leave placement.

### *Action Steps and Timeline:*

**a. Continue Transitional Living Services, Aftercare Services and opportunity for youth to contract for Board Extensions; In Process**

- Children and Youth will continue mentoring program for youth ages 16 and older in placement, and coordinate post-secondary education mentors with youth who have interest in pursuing post high school education or job skills program; In Process
- JPO to implement new policy for youth entering the juvenile justice system who may not return to a traditional family following placement.
  - i. The use of FGDM early in the placement episode to identify resources and establish a plan for aftercare.
  - ii. Collaboration with Children and Youth to blend transitional living services and to tap into Family Finding practices and Accurint software.

### **Strategy XIII:**

Bucks Co. JPO will continue to adhere to its philosophy of using the least restrictive alternative with the juveniles who come into the juvenile justice system. We will continue to strive to keep out of home placements at a level that is as close to 10% of the total number of juveniles under active supervision as is reasonably possible.

#### *Action Steps and Timeline:*

**In 2009 JPO staff will be trained in the use of the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI) assessment tool, which will then be implemented to help direct service needs and supervision levels; Long term – Ongoing**

One day at the beginning of each month we will run a report showing the total number of juveniles in any out-of-home placement measured against the total number of juveniles under active supervision to come up with a placement percentage. Our goal is to keep out of home placements at a level that is as close to 10% of the total number of juveniles under active supervision as is reasonably possible.

#### **Strategy XIV:**

Implementation of YLS/CMI.

*Action Steps and Timeline:*

2009 and ongoing.

**On March 30 through April 1, 2009, Sean Cassidy, Supervisor, Nick Caramenico, Intake Officer, and Bill Wiegman, Supervision Officer will attend a train the trainer in the use of the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI), an assessment tool designed to help direct service needs and supervision levels.**

- 1) May 2009, the trainers will train the Bucks JPOs in the use of the YLS/CMI.
- 2) June through August 2009 JPOs will use the tool and receive feedback and correction from trainers.
- 3) By September 2009, have YLS/CMI fully implemented as an integral piece of the Bucks juvenile justice process for every juvenile referred to Bucks Juvenile Probation Department.