



**The New York City Council,
Committee on Juvenile Justice
Thursday, February 28, 2013**

**“Int. No. 981: Reporting Demographic Data and Incident Reports on Youth Detained and
Placed in Juvenile Facilities”**

Testimony by

**Dawn Saffayeh, Deputy Commissioner, Policy, Planning and Measurement
New York City Administration for Children's Services**

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Good morning Chair Gonzalez and members of the Committee on Juvenile Justice. I am Dawn Saffayeh, Deputy Commissioner for the Division of Policy, Planning and Measurement at the New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS). Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to address the proposed legislation related to reporting data on youth in New York City's juvenile facilities.

Since the 2010 merger of the Department of Juvenile Justice and the Administration for Children's Services, ACS has worked diligently to collect and track detention data. We report juvenile detention data in our Flash Report, which graphically illustrates monthly trends in select child welfare, juvenile justice, and early care and education statistics, and in our Strategic Management Report, which we produce quarterly. We publish both of these reports on our ACS website. In addition, we provide City Council reports quarterly, which include incident and demographic data, as well as provide data that is included in the Mayor's Management Report, which is mandated by the City charter and produced biannually, both of which are also posted on our website. Finally, ACS produces on an annual basis a Community Snapshots Report which includes juvenile detention statistics broken down by community district.

We take our responsibility to collect and share data very seriously and we support the Council's proposed legislation to extend reporting requirements to our youth in placement, both non-secure and limited secure, on the same schedule that we do for our youth in detention. As we planned for Close to Home, ACS recognized the need to broaden our data collecting to include placement statistics as well as to develop quality assurance mechanisms. As such, we created a Juvenile Justice Planning and Measurement Unit (JJPM) that will measure provider performance and program outcomes for our juvenile justice placement programs.

ACS is committing to collecting and providing the same demographic data and incident information for our placement population that we presently provide for detention. While we agree that collecting and reporting the juvenile placement data is important, the proposed legislation fails to account for the fact that New York City will not be providing limited secure placement services until fall 2013. Given that non-secure placement went into effect in September 2012 and the proposed legislation requires the first demographic data report to be provided to the Council by September 30, 2013, the proposed legislation appears to contemplate a one-year "implementation period" for non-secure prior to ACS reporting data. We therefore request that the Council provide a similar "implementation period" for limited secure placement and the reporting requirements date for limited secure placement data to commence in fall 2014. Similarly, the proposed legislation states that the incident report data for non-secure placement could be required as soon as May 2013. Given that the demographic data contemplates a year grace period, we would similarly request a one year "implementation period" for incident reporting to be extended to September 2013.

Juvenile Justice Oversight Board and Resident Care Advocacy Program

In addition to our support for the proposed legislation, I would like to take this opportunity to update the Council on the work ACS has done over the past few months with respect to our juvenile justice programs. Recently, we testified before the Council on our Resident Care Advocacy Program (RCAP). As we mentioned during that hearing, with the Close to Home initiative currently underway, ACS has recognized the need for a more robust oversight mechanism to adequately address young people's needs and to continuously monitor and improve the safety and strength of our programs in both detention and placement. We have therefore created the Juvenile Justice Oversight Board that will oversee both secure and non-secure detention, as well as non-secure and limited-secure placement. The Board will analyze the data that we collect, among a number of other tasks, and discuss their findings with agency officials. We believe this will help us to assess and, where needed, improve the conditions of our detention and placement facilities.

ACS will also be hiring two additional ombudspersons to augment our existing Resident Care Advocacy Program (RCAP). The role of the ombudsperson is to ensure that all youth understand their right to report and pursue a grievance and the process for doing so. We expect that the ombudspersons will inform the work of the Board by participating in meetings and raising issues that are brought to their attention with Board members. The deadline for the Juvenile Justice Oversight Board membership applications is today and we look forward to updating the Council as we implement the Oversight Board.

Close to Home Update

As the Council knows, Phase I of Close to Home has been underway since this past September. Once it is fully operational, we will have the capacity to serve approximately 319

non-secure placement youth. We released the Request for Proposals for the aftercare system last November and are currently evaluating proposals. We expect contracts to be awarded in late April and that contracts will be enacted on July 1, 2013. Currently, we have 231 youth in active non-secure placement care.

ACS is planning for the second phase, Limited-Secure Placement, which will begin fall 2013. Like non-secure placements, young people in limited-secure settings will receive a full range of services and supports. However, limited-secure placements will have more restrictive features to ensure the safety of residents, program staff, and communities. ACS has hosted five community forums to obtain the public's feedback on limited-secure placement and we plan to distribute the draft plan for public comment in early March. Pursuant to the legislation, after we release the draft plan, ACS will also hold five public hearings this spring to obtain public comment. We will incorporate the feedback we received from the public into the plan, which we will then submit to OCFS for review and approval.

Similar to the procurement process for non-secure placement, for Limited Secure placement, ACS will issue a Negotiated Acquisition seeking highly qualified providers with extensive foster care and juvenile justice experience to provide services at an expected 9-11 residential sites within the five boroughs or close to New York City. We plan to begin accepting youth into limited secure placement beginning in fall 2013 and have an anticipated capacity of 158 youth.

Limited secure facilities will have multiple safety and security measures both to protect residents and to also ensure the safety of the surrounding community that may include things like: designated entry and exit points; full perimeter lighting; locked doors and windows; security cameras and closed circuit television monitoring. We will seek to avoid frequent

transportation of youth in and out of the facilities by providing most services on site. Some of the onsite services will include: medical, dental and mental health services; counseling and individual meeting rooms; space for family, attorney visits and conferences; indoor recreation space; outdoor yard space within the facility's property; and education. We will have a rich direct care staff ratio of one staff for every three youth and each facility will have a staffed control room operating 24/7 that controls facility entry and exits and responds to emergencies. In addition, providers will be required to create community advisory boards that will meet quarterly – these groups will consist of local residents, faith-based organizations, civic groups and other community members.

Closing

This is an exciting time for Children's Services and our juvenile justice programs. We are grateful for all of the support of the Council as we continue to strive to improve services for the City's most vulnerable young people. I will now take your questions.