

**CWLA Data Subcommittee  
Meeting and Work Summary – September 26, 2007**

**I. WORK PROGRESS**

The Data Subcommittee met on 8/28/07 & 9/10/07 to complete the following:

- i. Continue to cross-reference cases and verify data for all cases.
- ii. Resolve/ clarify questions for data collection. Process data and complete questions with demographic information.
- iii. Look at all cases in juvenile justice system. Document any self-reporting of abuse of these cases as “unsubstantiated” maltreatment.
- iv. Fully document data collection process and make recommendations for future data collection efforts.

**II. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY**

The Data Subcommittee conducted a point-in-time survey for all open child welfare/ juvenile justice cases at the Department of Human Services (DHS) in the St. Croix District for June 29, 2007. Social Workers at DHS/Division of Children, Youth and Families, the Youth Rehabilitation Center (YRC), and Virgin Islands Behavioral Services (VIBS) were asked to complete a six-page form that detailed each child’s name and demographics, abuse and juvenile justice histories, school history, and mental health and substance abuse histories. These forms were then collected and processed by the Data Subcommittee.

Each case was entered into a database to determine any duplication of cases (i.e. those cases that existed at both YRC and DHS), to determine which cases had entered the juvenile justice system, and to identify all of the current dual-jurisdiction cases (youth entering the juvenile justice system with a history of maltreatment).

The Data Subcommittee used the “CWLA Data Elements” questions to determine which data elements to process. As such, the variables analyzed included age, race, gender, current living status, past living status, type of offense, repeat offender status, school status, history of problems in school (i.e. truancy, suspensions, and/or grade retentions), special education status, mental health diagnosis, substance abuse history, and probation status. With these variables, the Data Subcommittee created the following spreadsheets:

- CHART A: Youth Entering the Juvenile Justice System**  
(Youth with a History of Abuse vs. Youth with No History of Abuse)
- CHART B: Youth Entering the JJS with a History of Maltreatment**  
(Youth w/ History of Substantiated Abuse vs. Youth w/ History of Unsubstantiated Abuse)
- CHART C: Youth Incarcerated at YRC with a History of Maltreatment**  
(Substantiated Abuse vs. Unsubstantiated Abuse)
- CHART D: Youth Currently in Foster Care and Entering the JJS**  
(Substantiated Abuse vs. Unsubstantiated Abuse)
- CHART E: Youth on Probation with a History of Maltreatment**  
(Substantiated Abuse vs. Unsubstantiated Abuse)

The “CWLA Data Elements” questions asked the Data Subcommittee to also examine those youth with a history of maltreatment who had been diverted from the juvenile justice system. The committee determined that there is currently no way to measure this since there is no protocol in place to identify youth as pre-delinquent (and therefore diverted from the system). Furthermore, the “CWLA Data Elements” questions regarding “youth at a secure correctional facility” and “youth at disposition on a delinquency hearing” were determined not to be relevant to the Virgin Islands.

### ***Substantiated vs. Unsubstantiated Abuse***

Youth entering the Juvenile Justice System were determined to have a history of substantiated maltreatment if the abuse was substantiated by the courts. To determine those youth who had a history of unsubstantiated abuse, the Data Subcommittee met with the Social Workers who had completed the forms and examined the cases of each youth who had entered the juvenile justice system. From their extensive experience and knowledge of each case, the Social Workers could verify those youth who had a history of unsubstantiated maltreatment.

### ***Challenges***

Although each form asked for complete school, mental health and substance abuse histories for each case, files were not always complete regarding these variables. Further research would be required into DOE and DOH files to obtain the complete histories of each youth in question.

## **III. FINDINGS**

### **OVERALL**

- DHS had 347 open cases in the St. Croix District on June 29, 2007. This included cases at the Division of Children, Youth and Families, YRC, and VIBS services (Crisis Stabilization Center, Girls Group Home, Boys Group Home, the Cottage, and JISS).
- Of the 347 cases, 123 cases had youth who had entered the juvenile justice system, representing 35.7% of all open DHS cases.
- There were 19 cases of substantiated maltreatment among the 123 youth who had entered the juvenile justice system, representing 15.4% of all JJS cases. There were an additional 47 cases of unsubstantiated maltreatment, creating a total of 66 youth with a history of maltreatment, representing 53.7% of all JJS cases.

### **CHART A: Youth Entering the Juvenile Justice System**

- Seventy percent of the youth entering the JJS with a history of abuse were fifteen-seventeen year olds, where as the same age group only represented 53% of youth who did not have a history of abuse.
- Females were also disproportionately affected by abuse, representing 27% of all youth with a history of abuse, but only 12% of youth with no history of abuse.
- Hispanic youth represented close to 1/3 of all JJS cases.

### **CHART B: Youth Entering the Juvenile Justice System with a History of Maltreatment**

- Eleven to fourteen year olds represented 24% of all dual-jurisdiction youth. The sixteen youth who fell into this category included one eleven year old, the

youngest youth to enter the juvenile justice system with a history of maltreatment.

- Hispanic youth comprised a higher percentage of substantiated cases of abuse (52% compared to 17% unsubstantiated). Alternatively, Black youth comprised a higher percentage of unsubstantiated abuse cases (81% vs. 47% of substantiated cases).
- Females also represented a higher percentage of substantiated abuse cases (52%), while only representing 17% of unsubstantiated cases.
- Over sixty-percent of all dual-jurisdiction youth are currently living in either Foster Care or at YRC, while eighty-percent of all DJ youth have a history of living in Foster Care, at YRC, or at both.
- Eighty-six percent of all DJ youth are either in-school or currently enrolled in GED training. However, over 95% of youth have a history of ongoing problems at school.
- Close to half of all DJ youth have a history of substance abuse and/or a mental health diagnosis.

#### **CHART C: Youth Incarcerated at YRC with a History of Maltreatment**

- A total of 34 youth were incarcerated at YRC. Of the 34 youth, 21 had a history of maltreatment, representing 62% of YRC's population.
- YRC residents represented 32% of all DJ youth.
- Over 85% of YRC youth with a history of maltreatment had previously lived in foster care, at YRC, or both. Over 85% were also a repeat offender.
- Over 60% of the DJ youth at YRC were enrolled in special education services, and over 70% had a history of substance abuse.

#### **CHART D: Youth Currently in Foster Care and Entering the JJS**

- There were 21 youth in the foster care system who were entering the JJS with a history of maltreatment. They represent 32% of all DJ youth.
- VIBS had a total of 12 youth at their facilities (Crisis, GGH, BGH, and Cottage). Eleven of these youth had entered the JJS, representing 92% of their youth served.
- Females were disproportionately represented in foster care, comprising 57% of youth in the foster care system/JJS with a history of maltreatment.
- Seventy-six percent of DJ youth in foster care resided in residential facilities, and over 90% had previously lived in foster care, at YRC, or both.

#### **CHART E: Youth on Probation with a History of Maltreatment**

- There were 45 youth on probation, representing 68% of all DJ youth.
- Over half of all DJ youth on probation are currently living at home.
- Sixteen percent of all DJ youth on probation are not currently in school or enrolled in GED training.

## **IV. INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Create an assessment tool to be used across departments within DHS that would identify youth who are a risk of being delinquent. This assessment tool could also be used to track youth and monitor their progress throughout the system.

- Conduct further comparison studies with juvenile cases that do not have a history of abuse. Examine similarities and differences to determine effective interventions and services.
- Determine whether youth in the DHS system also had a parent or grandparent in the DHS system.
- Conduct a longitudinal study of the dual-jurisdiction youth in the DHS system on 6/29/07. Separate into at least two groups: those receiving the status quo in services, and those receiving intensive services. Track youth over a five-year period to determine success stories and what worked.
- Address compliance issues regarding mental health treatment for youth.
- Ensure that case files include all relevant information, including school, mental health, and substance abuse histories. Coordinate with Dept. of Education and Dept. of Health to ensure the sharing of information.
- Ensure that case files are updated on a regular basis, especially when youth are transferred to a new living situation (i.e. group homes, YRC).