

**BELKNAP COUNTY SYSTEMS INTEGRATION INITIATIVE
DUAL JURISDICTION YOUTH MULTI-DISCIPLINARY PROTOCOL**

I. Background

The Belknap County Dual Jurisdiction protocol has been developed to define pre-dispositional practice for children and youth within the Laconia District Office who come under the jurisdiction of the Division of Juvenile Justice Services (DJJS) as a result of a delinquency or CHINS petition and who themselves have a known history of substantiated abuse and/or neglect. The protocol creates a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) whose purpose is to conduct a refined assessment process which takes into consideration strengths, needs and risks of the target population of youth and their family; prepare a jointly developed pre-dispositional report for the court; develop recommended case plans and participate in care management. This new protocol is intended to enhance public safety, reduce recidivism, provide evidence-based and cost-effective interventions, reduce duplication of services, and more effectively interrupt the trajectory of deeper involvement in the juvenile justice and child protection system for the target population of dual jurisdiction youth and their families.

Through the implementation of this new protocol, stakeholders in the Belknap County juvenile justice, child protection, child welfare, and related public and private youth serving systems intend to collaboratively:

- improve strengths, needs and risk assessment information made available to the court for consideration at the time of disposition for a delinquent or CHINS petition before the court for the target population of dual jurisdiction children, youth and their families;
- implement best practice methodologies and procedures for multidisciplinary consideration of that information for case planning and care management purposes; and
- efficiently apply targeted interventions with known efficacy in order to reduce duplication of services and improve outcomes for children, youth and families.

II. Definitions

The following definitions shall apply to words or terms used in this protocol.

Dual Jurisdiction – A child or youth in the Laconia District Office who is currently the subject of a petition for delinquency and/or CHINS who has previously been found dependent, including abuse and/or neglect, in accordance with New Hampshire statute.

Known History of Substantiated Abuse and/or Neglect – Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Children, Youth and Family (DCYF): The child/youth has previously been found dependent, including abuse and/or neglect, in accordance with New Hampshire statute.

Jurisdiction of the Department of Juvenile Justice Services – Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Juvenile Justice Services (DJJS): The child/youth is currently the subject of a petition for delinquency and/or CHINS filed in accordance with New Hampshire statute.

III. Application of Protocol

Target Population

This protocol applies to Belknap County youth who come under the jurisdiction of the Division of Juvenile Justice Services as a result of a delinquency or CHINS petition and who have a known history of substantiated abuse/neglect.

Method used to identify the Target Population

Upon the entry of a juvenile into the juvenile justice system, through either a delinquency or CHINS petition, DJJS staff will coordinate with DCYF staff to utilize the Bridges data system to cross-reference the juvenile to determine if the juvenile has a current or previous substantiated history of abuse or neglect. (NOTE: If the juvenile is found to have an open case with the Division of Children, Youth and Families, the Joint Case Planning and Management policy defining assignment of CPSWs and JPPOs shall serve to guide the case coordination for these identified youth). If an affirmative match is determined, the multi-disciplinary team process is to be initiated in accordance with the next steps defined in this protocol.

Process/Method of Communication

When a juvenile has an open case in the juvenile justice system and is found to have a known history of substantiated abuse and/or neglect in the child protection/child welfare system, the JPPO or CPSW conducts a joint case conference within ten days of the identification of the case for application of the protocol. The primary case manager will determine who will make the formal request to the court to initiate the multi-disciplinary team (MDT) process.

The MDT members are informed, via e-mail communication, of date, time and place along with the agenda. Meeting times remain standard. The information supplied to team members will at a minimum contain:

- DOB of youth
- Basic Demographics
- All identified family members (with system involvement)
- Current involvement / basis of identification

IV. Multidisciplinary Team (MDT)

Purpose

The MDT is to collect and review available youth and family assessment information and histories, consider youth and family strengths, needs and risks; prepare a jointly developed pre-dispositional report for the court; and develop recommended case plans to be included in the submitted PDI report.

Mandated Participants

The Department of Health and Human Services shall permit a MDT to assist with Pre-Dispositional Investigations and evaluation of assessment reports through cooperative agreements with participating MDT members and appropriate agencies and organizations. Additionally the MDT, compelled by this protocol/process and the mission of DHHS to develop a family-driven care plan, must also include at a minimum the 1) family, child and family

supporters and 2) appropriate community based providers already working with the child/family.

Members shall include but not be limited to:

- Youth
- Parent(s) or Legal Custodian (or other persons legally standing in loco parentis)
- DCYF
- DJJS
- Family Identified Support / Advocate (e.g. NAMI, GS Federation for Families)
- Education (mandatory if the court has joined the school district under the provisions of Chapter 169-B:22)
- Mental Health
- Court Liaison
- All other legal parties to the case (e.g. DJJS and DCYF case participants)

Responsibilities

The MDT shall prepare a predisposition report pursuant to Chapter 169-B:16 subsections III, and IV, consisting of, but not limited to, the home conditions, school records, and the mental, physical and social history of the youth , and if ordered by the court, a physical, and mental examination of the youth conducted pursuant to RSA 169-B:20 and RSA 169-B:21, and RSA 169-B:23. Additionally, the MDT shall include a summary of the assessment and other appropriate and relevant background and treatment history information provided during the MDT meeting in the PDI/MDT report to the court.

Guiding Principles for the MDT

The Dual Jurisdiction protocol shall be guided by the following Vision Statement and Guiding Principles:

Vision Statement

Children, youth and families will have access to a quality of care that is cost-effective, efficient and based on the individual needs of their child.

Guiding Principles

- Collaboration and Coordination – Youth serving agencies, public and private will collaborate effectively through agreements and cooperation to develop a coordinated continuum of services at the state and local level.
- Support for Families – Services will provide easily accessible support to parents and relatives so they have the skills and resources to raise healthy children.
- Prevention Focused – Programs shall nurture and protect children in their earliest development, detect and prevent abuse and neglect, intervene at the earliest possible indication of risk, and be available to all families.
- Evidence-based Interventions – Providers will use evidence-based services and include clear outcome measures to evaluate results as available.
- Strength-based and Family-centered – Services shall build on the strengths and assets of youth, families and communities.

- Cultural Competence – Services and programs shall treat all youth and families with dignity and respect by understanding and valuing diversity.
- Fiscal Responsibility – Services and programs shall ensure cost-effective service delivery and strive to reduce unnecessary duplication of interventions.
- Outcome Focused – Services and programs shall identify and pursue measurable outcomes in such areas as:
 - reduction in numbers of youth in out-of-home placements;
 - reduction of time in detention;
 - decline in frequency of police contact;
 - school success realized;
 - safety at home or with a caregiver;
 - active community support;
 - elimination of duplicate assessments and services;
 - individualized needs assessed and services tailored to the child;
 - easily navigable processes to ensure access to services;
 - involvement of children, youth and families in the case plan development;
 - implementation and evaluation of the service system.

V. Procedures for Joint Pre-Dispositional Assessment & Report

The JPPO or CPSW will convene the MDT for purposes of supporting the development and timely submission of the pre-disposition court report.

The Pre-Dispositional MDT report shall consider the following:

- demographics
- the basis for the involvement;
- a review of the history of involvement of the delinquency and dependency systems;
- a review of history on the youth and family;
- all relevant assessments, evaluations and reports, including a review of all medical, clinical and educational records pertinent to the process;
- strengths, needs and risks for the youth and family; and shall
- describe interventions, objectives, recommendations and desired outcomes.

Any assessment identified by the MDT (historically or recently performed) or summary reports that are available through members of the multi-disciplinary team shall be made available 5 days prior to the court hearing in order to be included in the pre-dispositional/MDT report filed with the court. Any report requested of a team member that will be the by-product of a needed assessment or re-evaluation shall be made available to the JPPO or CPSW at the earliest possible date once the assessment is completed.

Recommendations /Report Format

The completed MDT Pre-Disposition Investigation court report shall be submitted by the JPPO or CPSW as a single, joint document summary to the court. As a part of the record of the court, subsequent availability for use by authorized professionals shall be guided by the New Hampshire statutes regarding confidentiality, federal statute (e.g. HIPPA, FERPA) and properly

executed release/consent forms and include 1) a summary of the information considered for the report, 2) summary findings of all assessments, and 3) summary of recommendations and resources needed to achieve desired outcomes.

The submitted report shall be in compliance with the provisions of Chapter 169-B:16, subsections III and IV of the New Hampshire statute.

Conflict Resolution Procedure

When there is disagreement in the MDT on the recommendations to the court, the report to the court shall include:

- a statement of the issues involved in the conflict,
- the positions taken by the parties, and
- what steps were taken to resolve the issues.

The report shall indicate if the decision was made jointly by DJJS and DCYF, or by either division alone.

Submission of Pre-Dispositional Report

The JPPO or CPSW, following the MDT's review, shall be responsible for submitting the pre-dispositional report to the court in accordance with the language of this protocol and consistent with state statutory provisions.

VI. Timelines for MDT/Pre-Dispositional Report

Pursuant to RSA 169-B:16; V., the court shall hold a hearing on the final disposition within 21 days of the adjudicatory hearing if the youth is detained and within 30 days of the adjudicatory hearing if the youth is released to consider the PDI/MDT report and the recommendations contained therein.

At a minimum, all cases submitted through this protocol will be reviewed quarterly by the full MDT and facilitated by the appropriate designated JPPO and/or CPSW staff at the regularly scheduled bi-weekly meeting. The MDT may propose revisions to the disposition and make recommendations to the court as a quarterly review may stipulate.

VII. Conclusion

This protocol will be utilized in a demonstration project for 10 dual jurisdiction cases beginning in 2010 and reviewed at the end of 2011 to examine benefits to the child and family; program and system challenges that were overcome and those that remain; and implications for future systematic changes and resources to further improve the efficacy and outcomes for children and families.