



DJS State Advisory Board Fatality Review Findings and Recommendations
December 2020

The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) Fatality Review Team (FRT) presented the cases of youth who suffered a fatality while under DJS supervision. The Fatality Review Subcommittee (FRS) of the DJS State Advisory Board (SAB) also reviewed the cases with the FRT and developed recommendations which were presented to the SAB to review and finalize. Below are the key findings and recommendations proposed by the DJS SAB:

Findings:

- Meeting the needs of emerging adults is a theme for the majority of these cases; most of the youth reviewed were not attending school, had very little educational attainment, were not employed, and were involved in the criminal justice system.
 - DJS has responded by starting a new program specific to addressing the emerging adult population. The program addresses youth aged 16 – 23 years old and is based on a model used by ROCA.
 - The Juvenile Justice Reform Council (JJRC) is also working on this issue and developing recommendations to set limits on the age jurisdiction and dependent on the crime committed.
- Poor availability of reliable transportation creates barriers to services.
- There is a communication issue between DPSCS and DJS when youth have cases in both systems.
- In several cases, the legal history reflected judiciary dismissals despite frequent court appearances and recommendations to the contrary.

Recommendations:

- Create teams of staff and service providers with skills and training to meet needs specific to emerging adults, including services which will continue post-supervision/DJS involvement.
 - Analyze currently used youth assessment tools to ensure youth's needs and the barriers to meeting those needs are being considered.
- Develop pathways for education/vocational assistance that go beyond credit recovery by creating incentive based programming, working with Governor's Workforce Development Board to promote job access and readiness, and develop pathways for GED waivers, when appropriate.
 - Create a seamless connection/transition between in-facility education and post-release education.
- Explore statutory changes that will guide judicial decision-making that promotes the use of services and programming that have proven to yield positive results and require and/or encourage parental participation in services.