

DJS State Advisory Board Fatality Review Subcommittee (FRS): Findings / Proposed Recommendations
May 2022

The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) Fatality Review Team (FRT) presented the case(s) of youth who suffered a fatality while under DJS supervision. The Fatality Review Subcommittee (FRS) of the DJS State Advisory Board (SAB) developed the following findings and proposed recommendations for the SAB to review and finalize. Below are the key findings and recommendations proposed to the DJS SAB:

Findings:

- Non-compliance with treatment services and programming
 - The primary issue in many of the cases was non-compliance with the services that were recommended by DJS or mandated by the court.
 - The youths did not accumulate an overwhelming number of charges, but the severity and consistency of their non-compliance with treatment/programming resulted in a continuation of justice system involvement.
 - Additionally, medication management was also a concern. Some youth demonstrated serious mental health issues and were either not prescribed the appropriate medications, or not taking what was prescribed.
- Lack of educational and alternative interventions
 - In each of the cases that was reviewed, the youth had little to no earned school credits toward graduation or a GPA and their attendance was abysmal.
 - MSDE and local schools need more resources and overriding interventions for struggling youth.
 - In addition to the regularly provided services, additional vocational and workforce development should be available to youth.
- The COVID effect
 - In some of these cases, court hearings were postponed due to unsafe pandemic conditions and/or the unavailability of virtual connectivity. Had this not been the case, services may have been made available at an earlier stage of the child's supervision.

Recommendations:

- Identify the options that may be available to assist in the expansion of the Youth Advocacy Program (YAP) and other similar programs in all jurisdictions around Maryland.
 - It was clear during the subcommittee's review, that, even in the most apparent instances of non-compliance, YAP was the only program where the youths were engaged and displayed noticeable progress. The expansion of similar mentorship programming is also needed.
- Increase communication and data collection between police and DJS when law enforcement engage with youth, but are not brought in on a formal complaint.
- Task the Commission on Juvenile Justice Reform and Emerging Best Practices to collect data that identifies repeat juvenile offenders who remain non-compliant and justice-involved in order to develop effective interventions prior to adulthood and prevent fatalities from occurring.