Know the Facts

The Problem

- 20% (67,000) of West Virginia children age 2-17 have one or more emotional, behavioral, or developmental conditions.
- In any given year, less than twenty percent of children with mental illnesses receive mental health services.
- 40% of West Virginia juvenile justice referrals are for truancy.
- An average of 539 youth resided in Juvenile Detention, Correctional, and/or Residential Facilities from 2003-2011.
- Students placed in out of home juvenile facilities stay on average 450 days (15 months), costing WV $20 million annually.
- The average cost of placing one youth in a DHHR out of home facility is $105,600 per year.
- The potential billing cost for one student at the proposed Dazzy Vance facility in Logan County, WV is $500 per day, or $182,500 per year.
- School Districts spent an average of 3.6 million dollars per year on out of state placements for special education students.
- High School Dropouts cost tax payers an average of $292,000 per student.
- US Department of Justice states WV is violating children’s civil rights and failing to comply with the American’s with Disabilities Act by over-relying on institutionalization.

The Solution

Early Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment

- Research shows that early identification and intervention can minimize the long-term disability of mental disorders.
- Early and effective mental health treatment can prevent a significant proportion of delinquent and violent youth from future violence and crime.
- Prevention and early intervention programs that target elementary school-aged students who are academically and socially at risk have been shown to produce declines in special education referrals and placement, suspension, grade retention, and disciplinary referrals.

Expanding School Based Mental Health Services

- Expanded school mental health services in elementary schools have been found to reduce special education referrals, improve aspects of the school climate, and produce declines in disciplinary referrals, suspension, grade retention, and special education referrals and placement among at-risk students.
- When school-based mental health services are available, students are substantially more likely to seek help, especially those enrolled in special education programs.
- School-based drug abuse prevention programs have been conservatively estimated to provide a benefit of $840 in social benefit per student, compared to a program cost of $150 per student.
- A meta-analysis of school-based social and emotional learning programs involving more than 270,000 students in grades K-12 revealed that students who participated in these programs improved in grades and standardized test scores by 11% compared to students in control groups.
- The school system is the largest provider of mental health services to children and, for many of these children, it is the only source of mental health care.
- School Psychologists are professionals with “expertise in mental health, learning, and behavior, to help children and youth succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally.”
References:


