

Expanding the Therapeutic Court Model

MIDD Advisory Committee Presentation

Judge Judith Ramseyer – Chief Judge, Juvenile Court

Aaron Parker – Juvenile Court Services Manager

Katie Hurley – Department of Public Defense

Jimmy Hung – Prosecuting Attorney Office

Agenda

- Introduction to Juvenile Therapeutic Response and Accountability Court (JTRAC) Behavioral Health Response (BHR)– Judge Judith Ramseyer
- Review of Expansion of Therapeutic Court Model and 3 pillars of JTRAC – Aaron Parker
- Redirecting funds to community supports – Katie Hurley
- Using connection to services and community to reduce sentencing/charge for the young person – Jimmy Hung
- Q&A – All

Overview

History/Background

- Therapeutic courts, like Juvenile Drug Court, were implemented to focus on underlying causes of juvenile crime
 - For eligible youth ready to tackle substance abuse issues, treatment courts have been successful
 - But, treatment courts are only available to a limited population and require an intensive, long-term commitment

Currently

- King County has an increased commitment to keep youth in community and out of confinement
 - Half of youth referred by law enforcement who have committed misdemeanors are diverted from court
 - Low-risk offenses and family violence offenses are successfully diverted with programs and service
 - Youth who qualify on substance abuse assessment and are willing to commit to intensive treatment are offered a therapeutic off-ramp to criminal prosecution with the Drug Court Model
 - But, youth who have criminal history or a referred for more serious felony offenses are often prosecuted the “traditional” way: negotiation, plea, and sentence that involves community supervision or commitment to State-run institution (JR)

Overview (con't)

Next

- Juvenile Court would like to move all court services toward a therapeutic model, and offer a Behavioral Health Response (BHR) that focuses on treating the underlying causes of crime rather than solely responding to the symptoms
- BHR will take best elements of therapeutic drug court and apply these principles to youth charged with range of serious offenses for which they ordinarily would be sent to a juvenile institution for anywhere from 4 months up to age 24

Elements of Behavioral Health Response

Expansion will broaden availability and benefits of Behavioral Health Response (BHR) for court-involved youth



INCREASE:

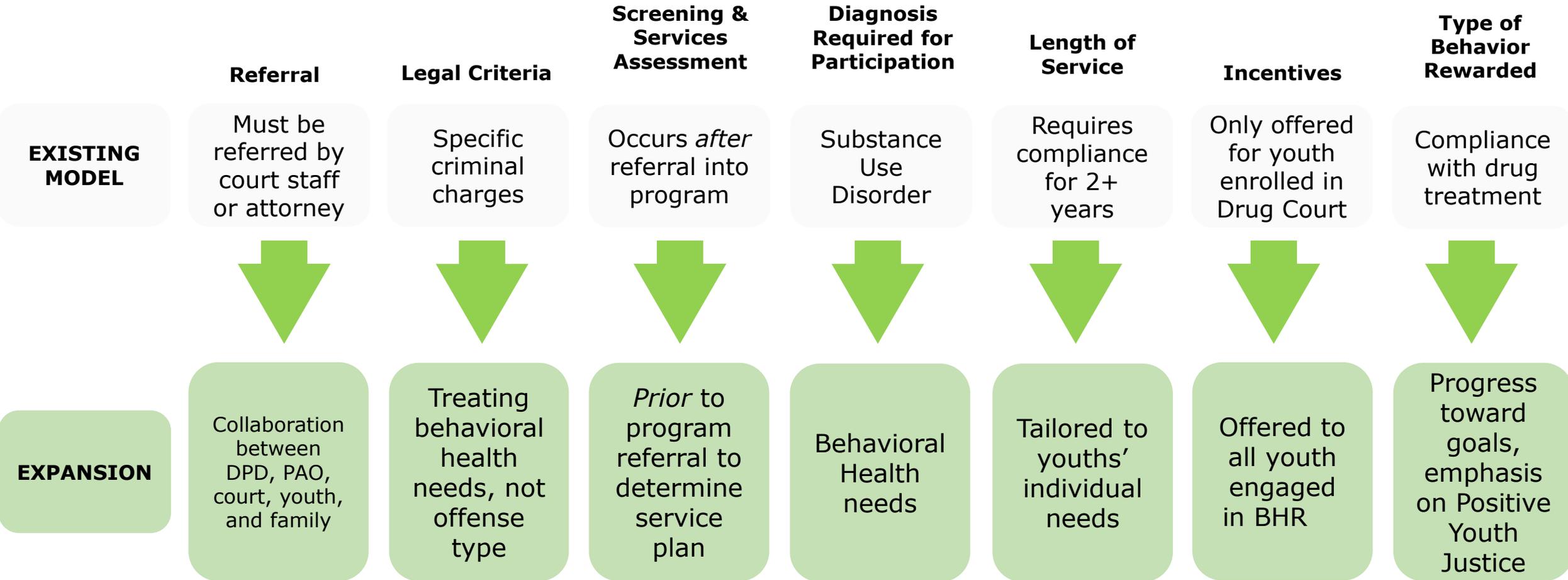
- Access to behavioral health supports and services for youth and families
- Connection and asset-building
- Individualized supervision to meet unique needs of youth
- Collaboration between court, providers, DPD, & PAO
- Incentive based participation, using strengths-based justice model
- Community-based support and services
- Incentives for youths' positive efforts
- Legal benefit



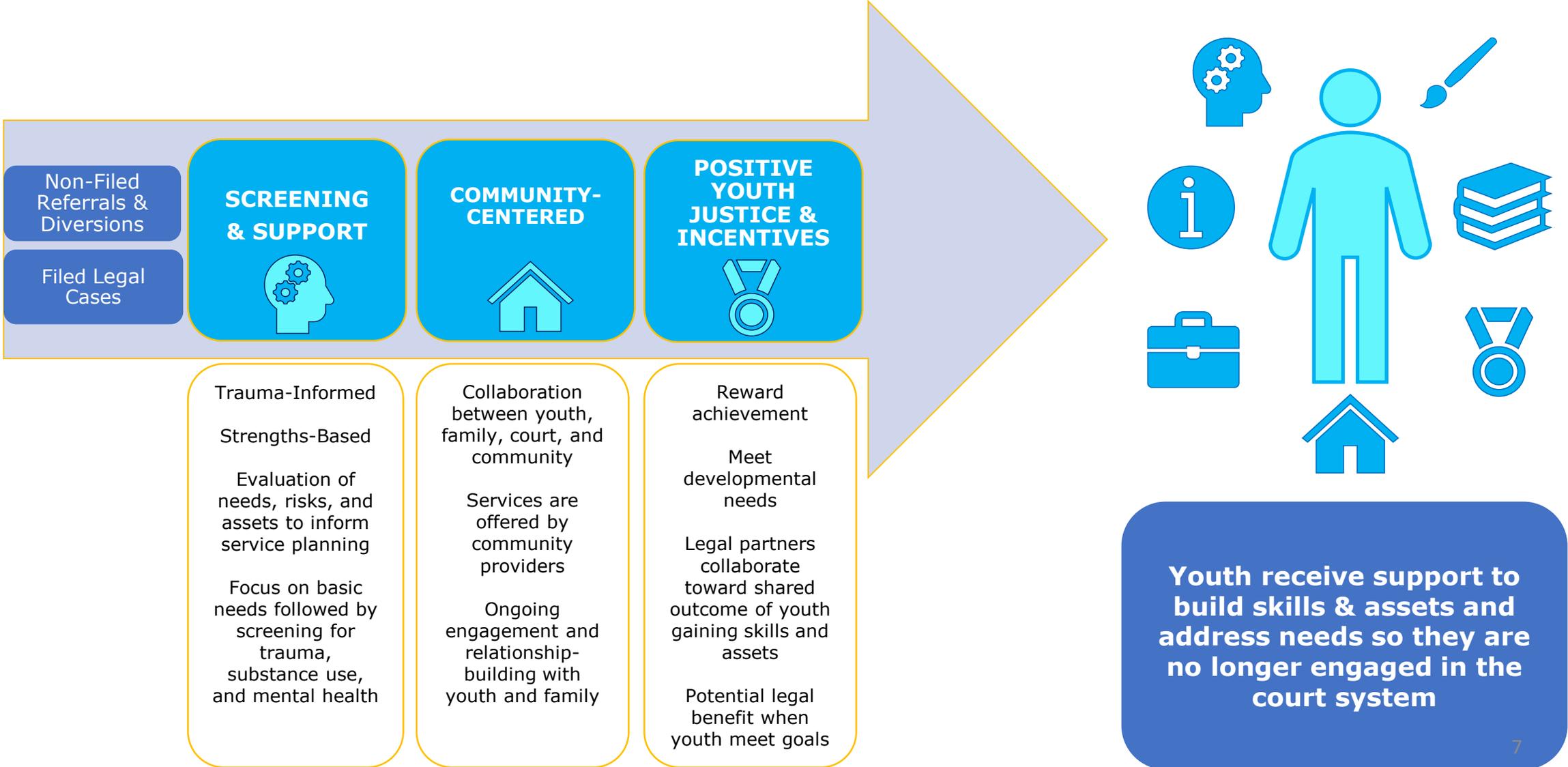
REDUCE:

- Delays in providing service
- Barriers to service: referral source limitations, observation period, and "opting-in" all eliminated in expanded model
- Charges and sentencing lengths for youth who participate

Existing Model vs. Expansion of Therapeutic Court Model



Juvenile Therapeutic Response and Accountability Court



Non-Filed Referrals & Diversions

Filed Legal Cases

SCREENING & SUPPORT



Trauma-Informed
Strengths-Based

Evaluation of needs, risks, and assets to inform service planning

Focus on basic needs followed by screening for trauma, substance use, and mental health

COMMUNITY-CENTERED



Collaboration between youth, family, court, and community

Services are offered by community providers

Ongoing engagement and relationship-building with youth and family

POSITIVE YOUTH JUSTICE & INCENTIVES



Reward achievement

Meet developmental needs

Legal partners collaborate toward shared outcome of youth gaining skills and assets

Potential legal benefit when youth meet goals



Youth receive support to build skills & assets and address needs so they are no longer engaged in the court system

Community Supports

Redirecting funds to community supports

- **Intentionally shifts resources** from the formal justice system to trauma-informed and healing-centered community systems of care and support
- **Centers racial justice** by recognizing the extreme disproportionality within the juvenile legal system and creating a pathway for youth charged with serious violence or facing a juvenile prison sentence to remain with their families and in their community, while also receiving a life-changing legal case benefit
- **Recognizes that accountability** is different than punishment and requires both agency and dignity within healing-centered spaces that strengthen protective factors

Legal Benefits

Using connection to services and community to reduce sentencing/charge for the young person

- **Legal case benefits:** Youth who successfully engage in therapeutic interventions through BHR/JTRAC will earn, such as a reduction and/or dismissal of charges
- **Justice is best achieved in partnership** with community and youth are best served when supported in the community
- **When stakeholders work collaboratively** to identify and meet the needs of youth and families, the Juvenile Justice system best serves our community

Summary of Key Changes

- **Apply** a therapeutic court model to a broader population of youth
- **Support** youth facing serious charges and long-term incarceration at a Juvenile Rehabilitation facility
- **Enhance** behavioral health response
- **Eliminate** barriers to service while reducing amount of time youth is committed to court-based programming
- **Place** financial resources in community to offer necessary supports: treatment, mentoring, peer parents, case management
- **Incentivize** positive outcomes with legal benefits for participation

Youth receive a tailored behavioral health response to build skills & assets and address needs so they are no longer engaged in the court system and so they can remain in the community

Questions

