

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:

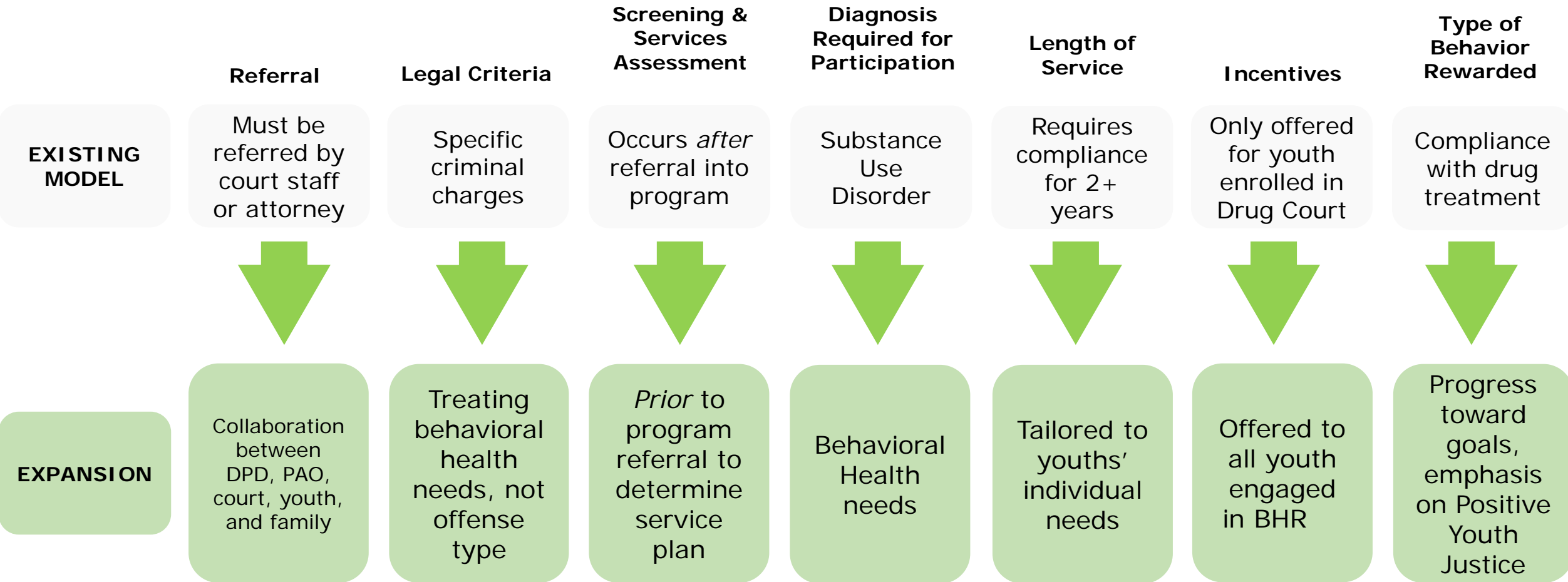
- Access to behavioral health supports and services for youth and families
- Connection and asset-building
- Individualized supervision to meet unique needs of youth
- Collaboration between court, providers, DPD, & PAO
- Incentive based participation, using strengths-based justice model
- Community-based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



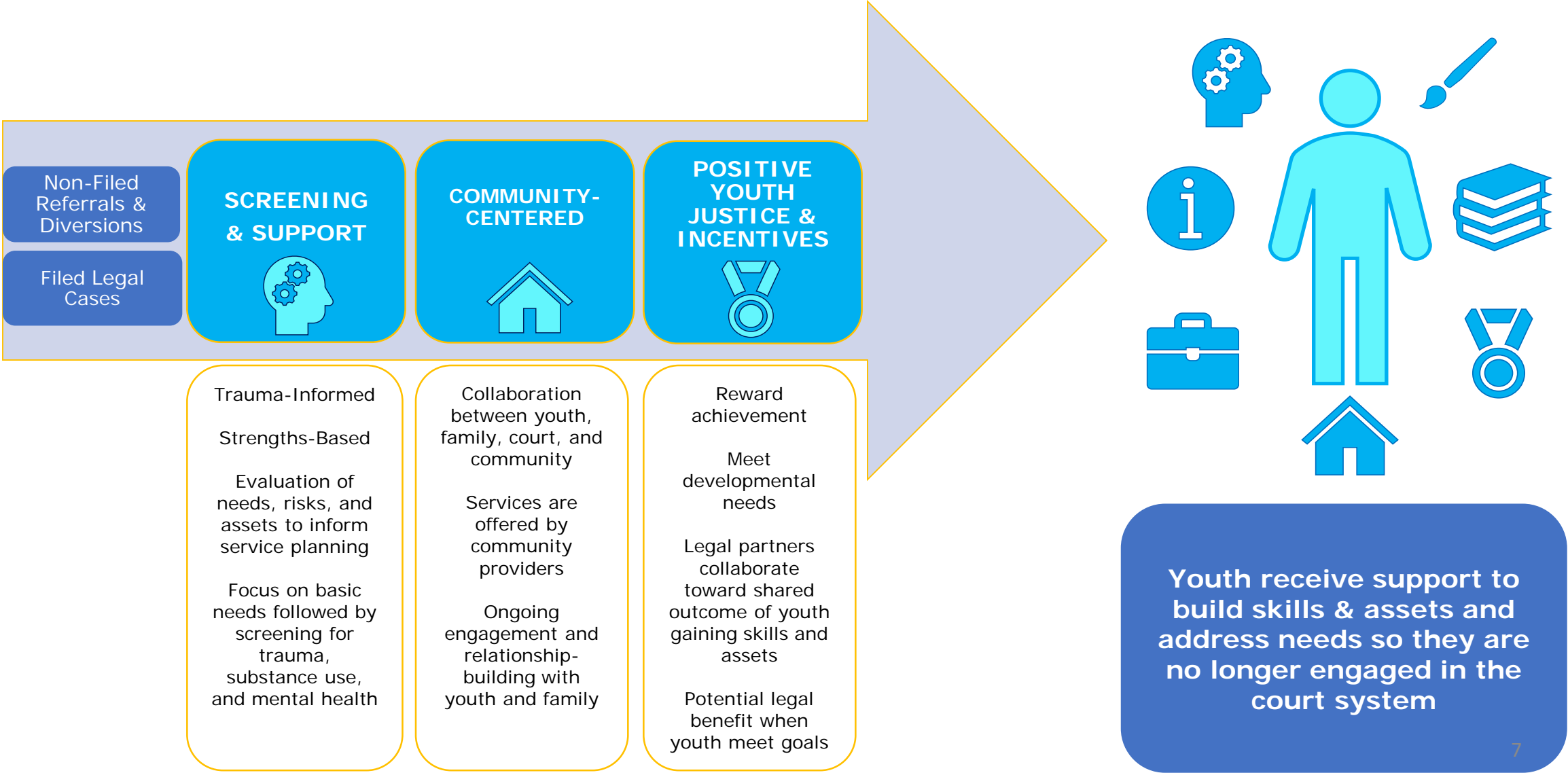
REDUCE:

- 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



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

