The Wyoming Department of Health
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Division
Report to the Joint Judiciary Interim Committee

Report on Grant Funding for Family Treatment Courts

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1. General Comments

During the 2007 Legislative Session, the Wyoming Department of Health was requested to provide a report to the Joint Judiciary Interim Committee no later than October 1, 2007, describing the grants awarded to new family treatment courts and any outcomes achieved. The Panel received one application requesting funding for a new family treatment court.

2. Specific Requirements of Statute

The 2007 Legislative Session Laws, Chapter 136, Section 048, Footnote 21, states, "Of this general fund appropriation, two hundred thousand dollars ($200,000.00) shall only be expended for the purposes of providing grants to drug courts meeting the requirements of W.S. 5-10-101 through 5-10-107, for the purpose of funding family treatment courts. These funds shall be awarded by the drug court panel, to drug courts that are not currently receiving grants from the panel. The department of health substance abuse division shall report to the joint judiciary interim committee no later than October 1, 2007, describing the grants awarded with these funds and any outcomes achieved. These funds shall only be expended for this purpose and shall be expended only on the condition that funding is not reduced for any drug court receiving these funds."

3. Impact/Consequences/Outcomes

Considerable national research has shown family treatment courts are effective means of reducing the need and cost of out-of-home placement. The 2007 Legislative Session, through a budget footnote, required the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Division (MHSASD) and the Drug Court Panel to fund a new family treatment court. First Judicial District Court Judge Arnold and agency/community stakeholders submitted an application to the Panel for funding. The Panel awarded the Laramie County Juvenile and Family Supervision Court the full amount of their funding request of $118,470 for development and implementation. The Court recently hired a full-time coordinator, and as of this date, has not served any families.

The Court seeks to serve 15 children and their families who have a pending Child In Need of Supervision (CHINS) action in Juvenile Court. Rather than going through the regular process of juvenile court, eligible and willing participants will sign a consent decree agreeing to the participation requirements of the program. The Judge and the court team will follow the progress of the child and his/her family. If they successfully complete the program, the petition will be dismissed. If a family is terminated or chooses to withdraw from the program, the petition will proceed on its regular track through the Juvenile Court system.

The mission of the Laramie County Juvenile and Family Supervision Court is to provide judicially managed community-based services, with close therapeutic supervision and specialized treatment to caregivers and juveniles whose behavior contributes to the risk of increased intervention by the judicial system. The court describes its goals as:

- The Laramie County Juvenile and Family Supervision Court will reduce the out-of-home placement of CHINS cases due to drug and alcohol abuse.

● The Laramie County Juvenile and Family Supervision Court will facilitate and increase family preservation through the use of family partnerships and judicial supervision

● The Laramie County Juvenile and Family Supervision Court will use a best-practice and clinically-sound approach to reduce chemical dependency and prevent relapses and increase sobriety for all family members.

● The Laramie County Juvenile and Family Supervision Court will use a best-practice and clinically-sound approach to identify and treat mental health issues for all family members.

● The Laramie County Juvenile and Family Supervision Court will use a best-practice and clinically-sound approach to identify and maximize familial strengths in order to promote successful families.

Team membership:
The Honorable Pete Arnold, First Judicial District Court
Brian Cook, Coordinator
Carol Serelson, Guardian ad Litem
Scott Homar (or his designee), Laramie County District Attorney's Office
Designee, Wyoming Department of Family Services Probation
Jim Demshar, Compass Point Wellness Center
Gay Van Horn, Laramie County School District #1
Dick Berry, Youth Alternatives
Sgt. Rick Wood, Cheyenne Police Department

4. Statistical Information

Not applicable

5. Recommendations

Not applicable

6. Summation and Conclusions

Not applicable

7. Appendices

Not applicable