

# Addendum



## Next phase of Juvenile Mental Health Screening, Assessment & Treatment Pilot Project under way; routine screenings at six centers

The Indiana State Bar Association announced last month that the next phase of the Juvenile Mental Health Screening, Assessment & Treatment Pilot Project will focus on implementing routine screenings for mental health and substance abuse disorders for youths in the juvenile justice system. As a result, boys and girls in Indiana's juvenile detention centers will receive the appropriate treatment and mental health services they need.

"Children in Indiana who find themselves in trouble have a more hopeful future today because of the work of volunteer members of the ISBA and the Indiana General Assembly who have devoted their hearts and minds to this effort," said ISBA President Douglas D. Church, of Noblesville. "The likely success of a systematic statewide screening process will not only be beneficial for the individual child who is helped, but it will ultimately save significant tax dollars by reducing recidivism and the costs associated with warehousing youthful offenders. We are proud to be participating in this great project."

In phase one of the pilot project, six of the state's 22 local juvenile detention centers – those in Bartholomew, Clark, Johnson, Lake, Marion and Porter counties – were selected to participate.

In 2006, these six participating counties admitted more than 8,000 troubled youths into their juvenile detention centers. On Jan. 1, these six pilot sites began routine mental health screening of youth entering detention centers. The second phase will require these counties to collect data and record screening results over the span of at least two years for all juveniles admitted into the system.

The goal of the pilot project is to provide a systematic statewide screening process to help identify youths in the juvenile justice system whose actions are attributed to mental health or substance abuse disorders. Screening, assessment and treatment can help reduce correctional costs and reduce recidivism rates.

"What is so exciting about the pilot project is that partnerships are being formed at the state and county level across multiple disciplines that traditionally have not worked together for youth in the

juvenile justice system," said JauNae M. Hanger, Indianapolis, vice chair of the Pilot Project Advisory Board. "These partnerships are key in changing how our communities respond to children with mental health needs, getting them help at the front door of the juvenile justice system."

The pilot project was a result of the nationally recognized Children, Mental Health & the Law Summit hosted by the ISBA in 2004. Child advocates, mental health professionals and juvenile justice officials are recognizing that early intervention, *before* children enter the juvenile justice system, and more effective intervention once children do enter the system are key strategies in addressing this growing crisis confronting children.

For more information about the pilot project, please contact Vice Chair Hanger at 317/375-8623 or [hangerj@iquest.net](mailto:hangerj@iquest.net). ☪

### UPCOMING EVENTS

April 23

World Justice Conference • IU School of Law-Indianapolis

May 16-17

Local Bar Conference • Holiday Inn, Lafayette

June 5-7

Solo & Small Firm Conference  
Grand Wayne Convention Center, Fort Wayne

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