



STATE OF FLORIDA
DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 16, 2012

TO: Jill Bessette, Director, North Region Probation
Tim Nierman, Director, Central Region Probation
Vanessa Hargray, Director, South Region Probation
Mary Mills, Director, Northwest Area Residential
Edgar Mathis, Director, Northeast Area Residential
Thomas McFadyen, Director, Central Region Residential
Lois Salton, Director, South Region Residential

FROM: Michael McCaffrey, Assistant Secretary for Probation
Laura Moneyham, Assistant Secretary for Residential Services

Michael McCaffrey
Laura Moneyham

SUBJECT: Low Risk to Reoffend Youth in Residential Commitment

As part of our juvenile justice reform initiative, the Department is increasing our efforts to ensure that kids receive needed services in the least restrictive environment possible. Research clearly indicates that kids assessed as low risk to reoffend have better outcomes and lower recidivism rates when served in the community rather than in residential delinquency programs.

As discussed on numerous conference calls, the Department is no longer recommending residential commitment for low risk to reoffend youth. Given the resources that have recently been coordinated in the community for mental health and substance abuse treatment, this goal is much more achievable now than in the past. While there may be rare exceptions to this practice, any variance must be approved by the Director of both Probation and Residential and discussed with us prior to completing a staffing for a low risk to reoffend youth. Questions for you to ask your Probation Officers and Commitment Management staff if they recommend residential commitment for these youth include, but are not limited to:

- What are the documented treatment needs?
- What community resources (rate agreements/purchase orders for service) have been explored to meet these needs?
- What services does the family need to help the youth stay engaged in treatment in the community?

2737 Centerview Drive • Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3100 • (850) 488-1850

Rick Scott, Governor

Wansley Walters, Secretary

The mission of the Department of Juvenile Justice is to increase public safety by reducing juvenile delinquency through effective prevention, intervention, and treatment services that strengthen families and turn around the lives of troubled youth.

These same questions need to be asked when recommending commitment for moderate risk to reoffend youth. While we are not prohibiting Department recommendations of commitment for moderate risk to reoffend youth, you are expected to ensure that all community alternatives have been explored and exhausted first.

The Positive Achievement Change Tool (PACT) has been shown to be a valid instrument in predicting risk to reoffend. Probation Directors, please ensure that there is an effective fidelity monitoring process in place in each circuit that addresses ongoing adherence to PACT assessment protocols. We will engage the Office of Program Accountability to assist us in developing effective fidelity management systems and provide training, as needed.