



Healthcare Challenges for Justice-Involved Youth: A Pediatric Perspective

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Overview

The Pediatric Interest Group (IG), consisting of students from the UConn Schools of Medicine, Dental Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Social Work, and Quinnipiac University's Physician Assistant program, addressed the emerging issues affecting the pediatric population. Through monthly student-led discussions the IG explored the complex healthcare needs of justice-involved youth, aiming to raise awareness, develop advocacy skills, and promote systemic changes to address health disparities and improve long-term outcomes for this population.

Objectives



Understand what it means to be "justice-involved youth"



Describe the burden of youth incarceration among the pediatric population



Pursue community service events to encourage nutrition awareness in the pediatric population

Methods

- The Pediatric IG met monthly from November to April over the course of the year.
- Before each meeting, an agenda outlining the planned topics of discussion was provided to each member by the group co-leads. Co-leads were responsible for compiling these agendas and ensuring that their contents were followed during each meeting.
- Roles were assigned in October, including attendance representative, meeting minute representative, and coordinators for community service, speaker research, and summit planning.
- Notable activities carried out during these meetings included expert presentations, journal club sessions, and treatment team simulations, with success evaluated through surveys and feedback from students and alumni.
- All events conducted within this IG were run and led by our students.
- Member feedback concerning IG activities and internal discourse was elicited at the end of every meeting.

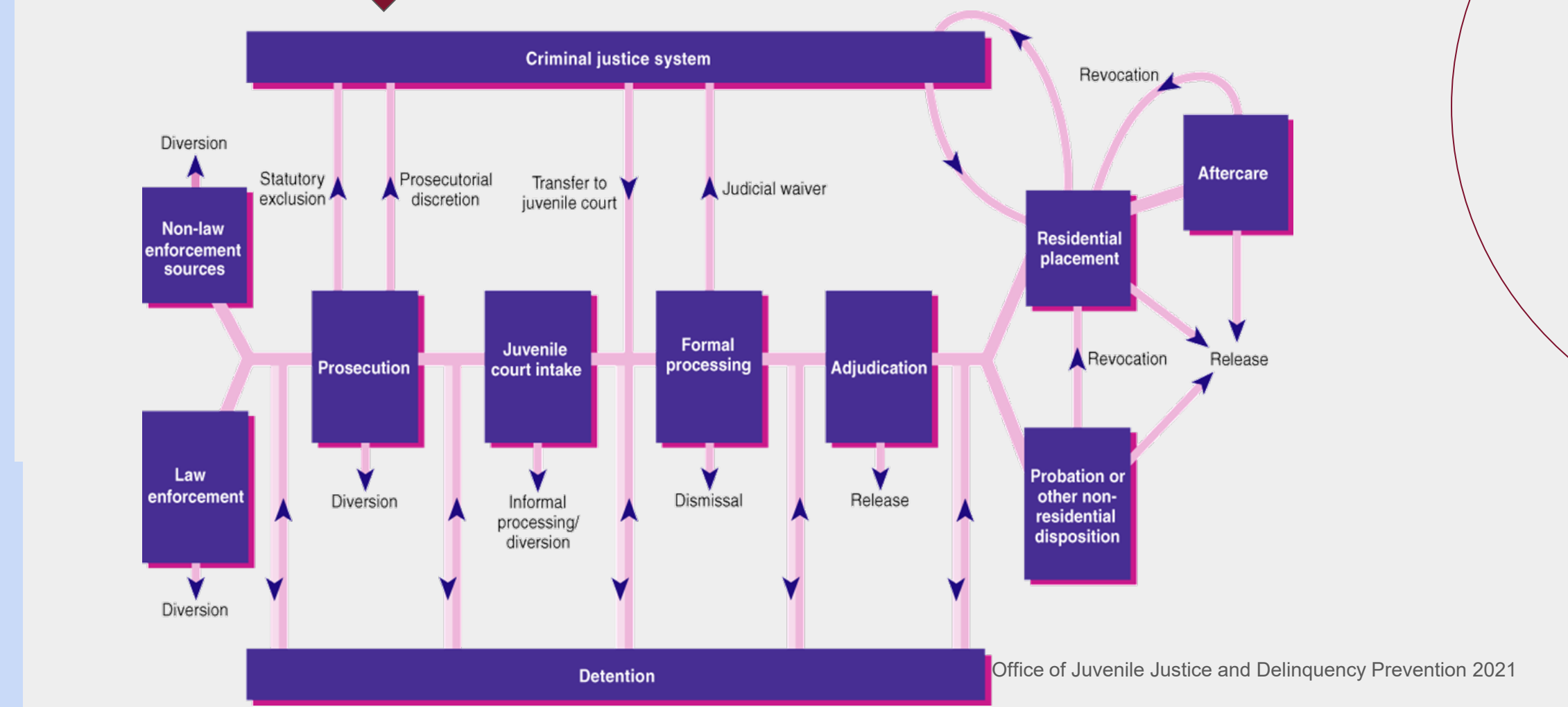
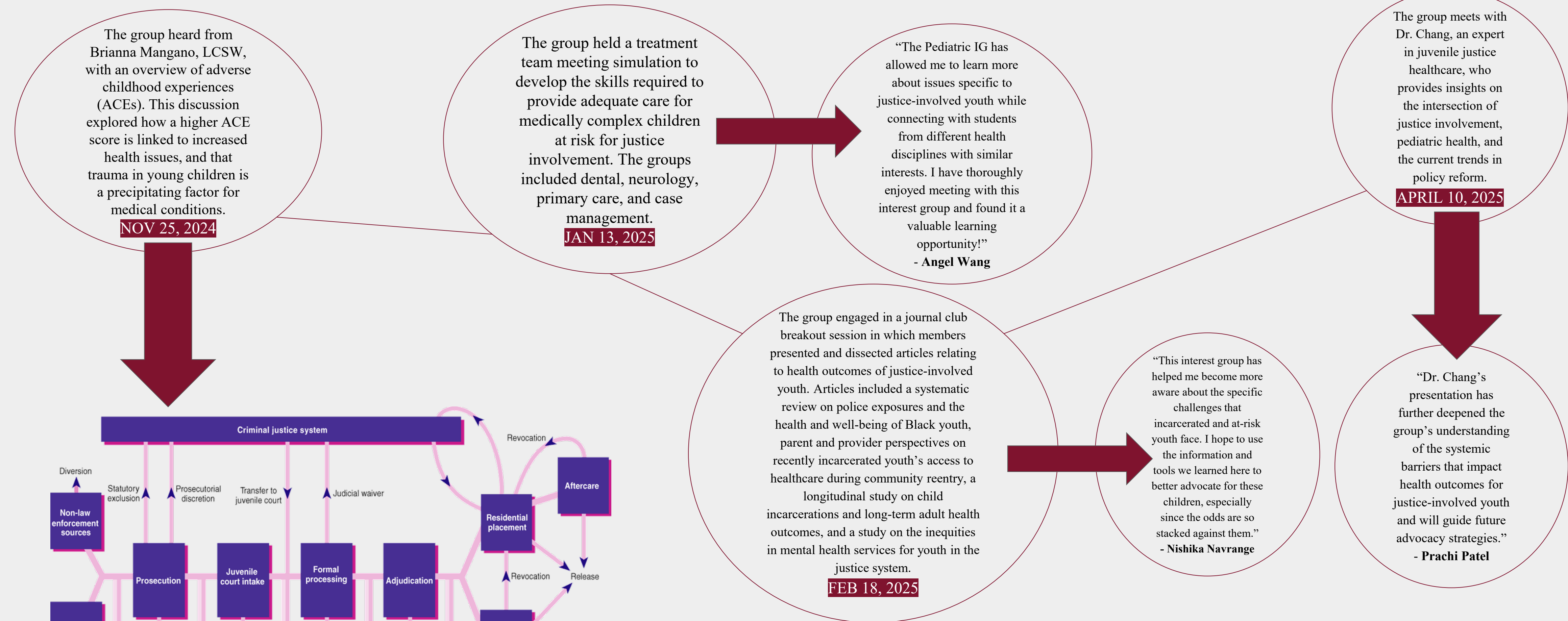
Background

This year the Pediatric IG focused on the healthcare challenges of justice-involved youth, highlighting mental health disorders, limited healthcare access due to Medicaid/CHIP ineligibility, and varying health outcomes across juvenile facilities. Justice-involved youth face increased risks for mental health disorders, substance abuse, and physical health issues that extend into adulthood, with stress from justice involvement contributing to **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)** and long-term health disparities.^{1,2,3} There is a shift toward community-based mental and behavioral health services including in Connecticut, emphasizing rehabilitation and support over reliance on correctional facilities, aiming to improve long-term health outcomes for justice-involved youth.⁴

Results

Monthly Meetings:

Each member or group of members presented on various topics within the umbrella term of pediatrics. These topics included justice involvement, nutrition education, mental health, and healthcare access. Members of the Pediatric Interest Group participated in virtual monthly meetings to further educate themselves about the health outcomes of justice-involved youth.



Conclusion and Future Directions

The Pediatric Interest Group recognizes that while progress has been made in community awareness, there remains significant work to be done in addressing the unique healthcare needs of justice-involved youth, ensuring equitable access to care and support.

References

Scan here for references.



A full list of articles, papers, and other materials cited for this project may be found using the provided QR code.

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