



ILLINOIS' PROPOSED CHILDRENS' TRUST FUND: IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview of Problem

Girls with mental health disorders are admitted to the juvenile justice system at disproportionate rates as their responses to trauma and behavior are being criminalized and perpetrated by the juvenile justice system.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness reports that almost two million youth are arrested every year in the United States. Out of these two million of the youth that encounter the juvenile justice system, up to 75 percent meet the criteria for a mental health disorder (NAMI, 2019).

Taking A Closer Look at How IL Compares

Girls are detained at a higher rate than boys for minor offenses such as prostitution, truancy, and running away. (Status of Young Women and Girls in Illinois, 2009). Girls experience risk factors such as victimization, unstable interpersonal relationships, and disrupted neighborhoods.

30,000 youth in Illinois are arrested and 11,000 youth are admitted to jails statewide (The Chicago Community Trust Staff, 2018). Mental health issues persist in up to 70% of youth who are arrested in Illinois (The Chicago Community Trust Fund, 2018).

IL Takes Action Where Criminal Justice & Health Meet

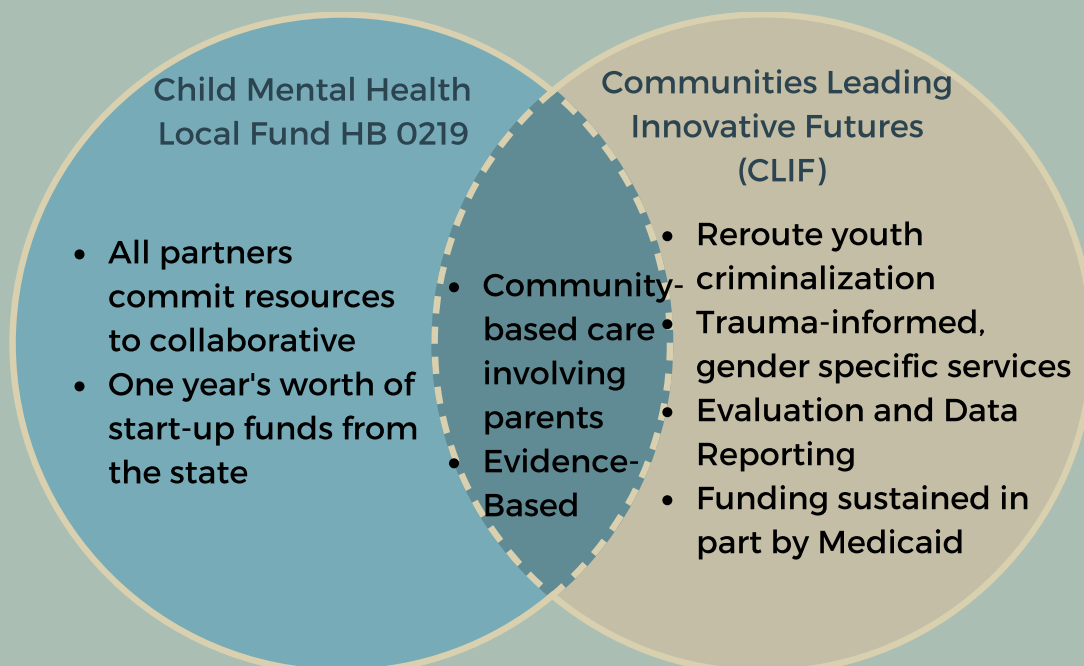
Mental health agencies all over the state of Illinois suffered major losses to their funding, which took drastic hits on the services that were available to clients (NAMI 2019). This was due to the state's inability to pass a budget, until recently in 2017.

The Opportunities for Youth Diversion Task Force within the Illinois Department of Human Services was created in 2016 with the goal of working on creative solutions for at-risk youth. Their recommendations recognize the disparities of youth with mental health issues, particularly youth of color and girls who come in contact with the juvenile justice system.

The recommendation that led to the creation of a currently proposed bill was a suggestion to create state-wide, community collaboratives between a variety of community stakeholders. This includes, but is not limited to local police departments, schools, parents, and churches

Proposed Bill: HB 0219

HB 0219 was originally proposed by Rep. Mary Flowers (D-IL). Currently, the bill is housed in the Mental Health Committee where it has been since January 29th, 2019. This bill would develop mental health collaboratives aimed for children and youth. Each county collaborative would develop a plan as to how agencies will contribute funds to the children's mental health collaborative to fund future years of sustainability.



How Will CLIF Empower Illinois Youth Compared to HB 0219?

CLIF's goal is to reroute youth with mental health issues, get them services that they need, and divert them from the juvenile justice system.

CLIF intends to fund collaboratives in addition to providing them with guidelines that ensure the safety and upmost well being of Illinois youth and their families.

CLIF emphasizes programming that is aimed toward at-risk girls and requires that all collaboratives have trauma-informed programming available for girls.

HB 0219, on the other hand, is a reactive policy and does not offer specific interventions to keep youth, especially girls, from early contact with the criminal justice system

Beneficial Elements of CLIF that Are Not Found in HB 0219

Evaluation factor: All communities that apply for funding would be evaluated by DHHS to ensure that the collaborative is in compliance with the law.

Data Reporting: Collaboratives would be required to collect biodata from the youth who they come into contact with like race and ethnicity,

Specialty Care: Creation of trauma-informed, gender specific services.

Prevention and Diversion: Re-entry committee dedicated to service provision, case management, and connect with health care provider. If an altercation were to happen in a school setting, the youth would be referred to the collaborative before a School Resource Officer proceeds with law enforcement measures.

Reconstruct the way funding is obtained: Creation of a system where medicaid funds a portion of the services that the collaborative provides. An accountability system will be created to keep track of how fund are being spent.



Girls Are The Future

CLIF realizes that girls in the US, and in Illinois need to be heard. Because of this, CLIF would take a proactive approach to prevention and case management in order to cultivate healthier communities.

This proposal is responsive to the needs of the community given the evidence that was mentioned above, in addition to providing services to all other youth needs.



Source: Human Rights Project for Girls 2015

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