

*February 2014*

# **Residential Treatment Facility (RTF) Services for Allegheny County Youth**

*A fact sheet from Allegheny HealthChoices, Inc.*



# INTRODUCTION<sup>i</sup>

Residential Treatment Facilities (RTFs)<sup>ii</sup> are places where youth (ages 6-20 yrs.) with severe emotional and behavioral challenges live away from home temporarily and receive comprehensive mental health treatment.

In recent years, Allegheny County has seen a decrease in the number of youth using RTFs, as well as lower total costs for providing RTF services. Average length of stay also decreased in 2012 after steadily increasing from 2005 to 2011. This is, in part, due to efforts to keep youth in their home whenever possible. Of note is that the average costs per service user has increased compared to previous years, but this can be attributed to rate increases for RTF programs.

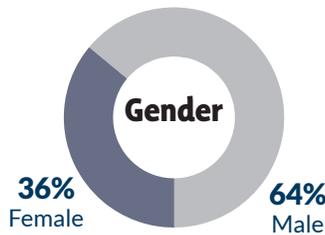
In an effort to provide information on one of the most intensive services for youth, Allegheny HealthChoices, Inc. (AHCI) developed this Fact Sheet to highlight who used RTFs in 2012, how long services were used, and what follow-up services youth received after discharge from RTF.

## HOW MUCH DID RTF COST AND WHO USED RTF SERVICE IN 2012?

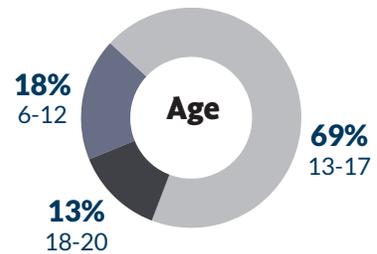
**1** 225 individuals used RTF



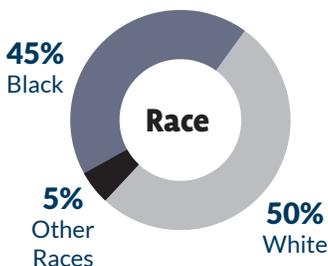
**2** Typically males



**3** Mostly ages 13 to 17 yrs.



**4** Slightly more youth who are white

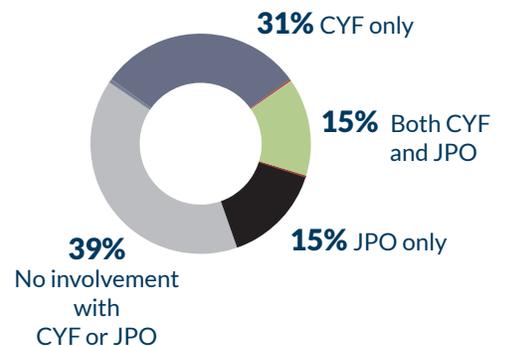


**5** Youth with the following mental health diagnoses (top 5)<sup>iii</sup>

- ADHD (24%)
- Major Depression (23%)
- Bipolar Disorder (20%)
- Conduct Disorder (14%)
- Oppositional/Defiant Disorder (8%)
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (8%)

**39% have a mental health AND a substance use disorder diagnosis**

**6** Slightly more youth involved with Children, Youth and Family Services (CYF) and/or the Juvenile Probation Office (JPO)



<sup>i</sup> Data for the "How much did RTF cost and who were RTF service users in 2012?" and "Follow-up after discharge" sections of this fact sheet are from 2012, but the trends are indicative of what has been observed over time.

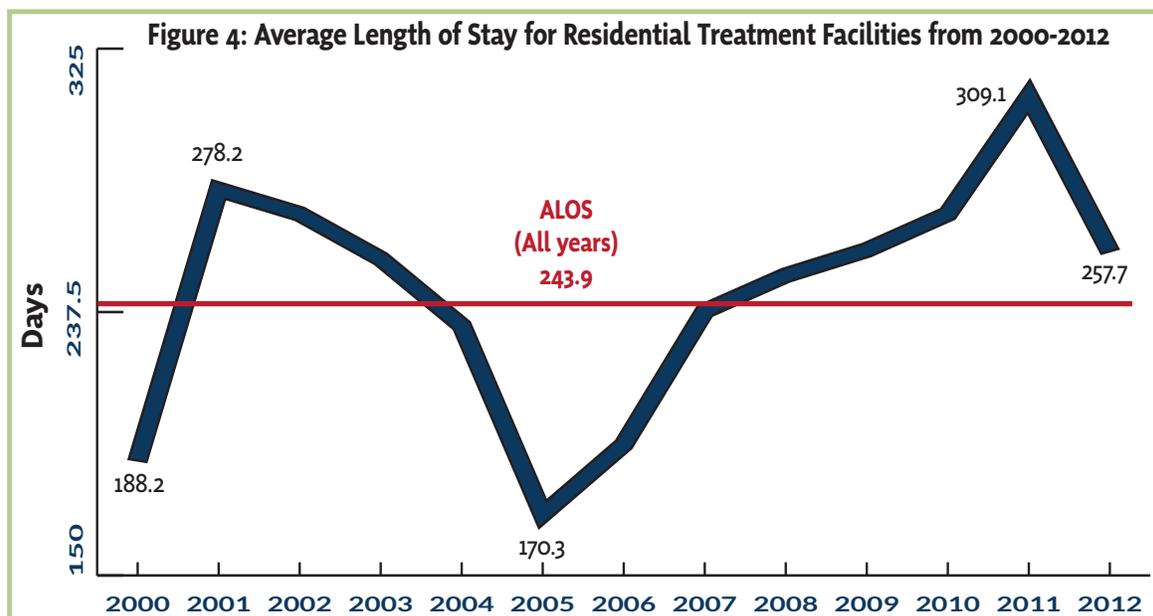
<sup>ii</sup> This report does not include data for individuals that used Short Term RTF/Diversion Acute Stabilization (DAS) services

<sup>iii</sup> Individuals may be included in more than one category due to multiple diagnoses.

## AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY (ALOS)

ALOS across RTFs nationally varies from less than two months to more than two years.<sup>iv</sup>

Shorter lengths of stay at RTFs (9 months or less) have been linked to positive outcomes for children and youth.<sup>iv</sup> In 2012, ALOS was 257.7 days or between 8 and 9 months. Figure 1 shows that ALOS was down by approximately 2 months from 2011. For all years, the ALOS was 243.9 days. The median LOS was 255.2 days.

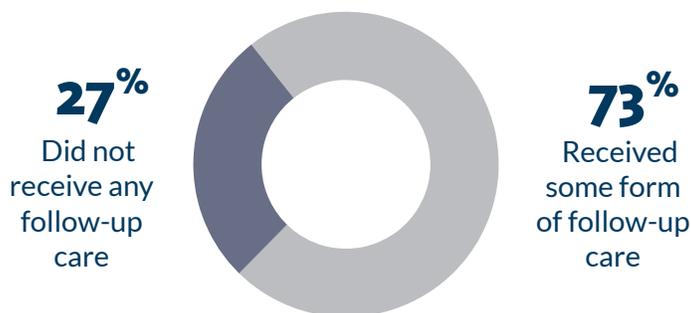


## FOLLOW-UP AFTER DISCHARGE

Research shows that behavioral improvements made in RTFs are not always easily maintained and may dissipate over time. This means that linking RTF more closely with community-based services to ensure aftercare is important.<sup>iv</sup>

In Allegheny County, 138 youth were discharged from RTFs in 2012. The percentage of youth receiving no services within 14 days post discharge from an RTF has decreased over time.<sup>v</sup> In 2012, 73% of youth received some follow-up care within 14 days of discharge (figure 2). The most frequently used services were family-based, outpatient mental health, and behavioral health rehabilitation services (table 1, on page 4).

**Figure 2 Follow-up Services Within 14-Days of RTF Discharge (2012)**



<sup>iv</sup> Walter, U. M. (2007). Best Practices in Children's Mental Health Report #20: Residential Treatment. School of Social Welfare. Lawrence: University of Kansas. Retrieved from <http://kusolarworks.ku.edu/dspace/handle/1808/3870>

<sup>v</sup> Ideally, follow-up care should be received within seven days of discharge. However, this can be a challenge for service providers and families. Due to this, data was reviewed for both 7-days and 14-days post discharge. Results for both timeframes were similar, therefore, 14-day follow-up information was used.

## FOLLOW-UP AFTER DISCHARGE CONT'D

Prior to discharge from an RTF, an authorization from the insurance company is usually required to receive follow-up services. Comparing authorization data to the percentage of youth that used the services that they were authorized to receive provides information on completion rates. Table 1 presents this data for the 2012 follow-up services used by the largest number of youth. Completion rates ranged from 39% to 100%, with behavioral health rehabilitation services having the lowest rate of completion.

**Table 1 Services Authorized vs. Services Received Following Discharge from RTFs in 2012 (n=138)**

<b>Top 5 Follow-Up Services in 2012</b>	Partial Hospitalization Mental Health	Family-Based	Service Coordination	Behavioral Health Rehabilitation Services	Outpatient Mental Health
% of people that <u>were authorized</u> for services <sup>vi</sup>	7%	33%	14%	28%	4%*
% of people that <u>used</u> services within 14 days of discharge <sup>vi</sup>	7%	32%	8%	11%	24%
<b>% of people that <u>were authorized for services and used them</u> (completion rates)</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>n/a</b>

\*Authorizations are not necessarily required for outpatient mental health. Claims are paid if the individual is Medicaid eligible and the provider accepts their insurance.

Lower completion rates may be attributed to a lack of available appointments within the 14 day period after discharge, or individual choice to wait before attending follow-up appointments. Nonetheless, overall, the completion rates illustrate that a large percentage of youth are receiving the follow-up services they are scheduled to receive. Efforts should continue to engage all youth in follow-up services to maintain gains realized while in RTF.

## SUMMARY

The youth receiving RTF services in Allegheny County continue to be mostly males, ages 13-17 years, and white. More than half of the youth served have involvement with Children, Youth and Family Services, and/or the Juvenile Probation Office. The number of youth using RTF services has decreased over the past several years, as has the total cost, and average length of stay began to decrease in 2012. Though cost per service user has increased, this is due to rate increases for providing this level of service.

Additionally, most youth (73%) receive some type of follow-up service within 14 days post discharge from RTF, with the most common service being family-based. Ideally, all youth should engage in some form of follow-up services in order to maintain and continue the improvements gained during an RTF stay.

<sup>vi</sup>Youth may have been authorized for and/or used more than one service.