



## **POSITION STATEMENT**

*Adopted by NPJS Board of Directors ~ October 18, 2011*

# **USE OF JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITIES FOR YOUTH WITH SEVERE MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES**

### **STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE**

Large numbers of youth with serious mental illness, significant developmental disabilities, and youth that are severely emotionally disturbed are housed in juvenile detention facilities. Increasingly, detention facilities are viewed as the only legitimate managers of these youth because they have physical plants that are able to securely maintain severely disturbed youth.

### **NATURE OF THE ISSUE**

- Juvenile detention facilities are forced to house youth with severe mental health issues who have committed incidental offenses, due to the lack of available appropriate community resources.
- Juvenile detention facilities are required to admit juveniles who have severe mental health issues who are charged with serious delinquent offenses.
- Juvenile detention staff are not sufficiently trained or equipped to provide adequate care for youth with severe mental health issues.
- Juvenile detention facilities do not provide an appropriate therapeutic environment conducive to the provision of appropriate services.

### **POSITION STATEMENT**

The National Partnership of Juvenile Services (NPJS) strongly advocates that juvenile offenders who have been identified by qualified mental health professionals as having severe mental health issues, be placed in the appropriate therapeutic environment, instead of juvenile detention facilities.

When juvenile detention facilities are forced to house youth with severe mental health issues, NPJS promotes the provision of adequate services by appropriately trained and licensed specialists.