

Recommendation

RESOLVED, That the American Bar Association urges federal, state, territorial, tribal, and local governments to assure that adequate and appropriate services are made readily available to at-risk youth and their caretakers by ensuring that:

- a) Community mental health systems serving youth are reinvigorated and significantly expanded to provide greater access to troubled youth and their caretakers;
- b) Stronger support is given to expanding the availability of evidence-based programs for youth and greater investment is made in research to identify additional evidence-based programs worthy of replication and use for at-risk youth;
- c) A positive youth development perspective is incorporated into services and programs, including opportunities that support young people in developing a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging and empowerment, through access to developmental services and activities facilitating positive connections among youth and with adults, and also offering young people valuable information and learning experiences to help them choose healthy lifestyles; and

Needed services and/or treatment should be provided to youth in need of such services by appropriate juvenile justice and child welfare intervention systems without the necessity or requirement of courts exercising jurisdiction over or adjudicating them.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the American Bar Association urges federal, state, tribal, territorial and local governments to develop and adequately support permanent interagency and other youth resource coordination mechanisms to help assure that at-risk youth and their caretakers receive timely and effective services through public child welfare, youth services, mental health, schools, and other agencies.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the American Bar Association urges attorneys and state, territorial, tribal, and local bar associations to help develop legal strategies to promote the above objectives while protecting youth rights to confidentiality and privacy, as well as to support government and private investment in coordinated, community-based mental health and other services to at-risk youth and families, available without involvement in juvenile justice or child protection systems.