

# Safe at Home West Virginia

*Working together* to provide opportunities for youth to lead safe, healthy, and successful lives within their home communities.



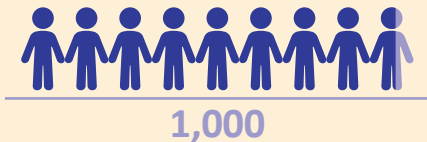
## What is Safe at Home West Virginia?

Safe at Home West Virginia is a new approach to providing child welfare and community services to youth and their families. This initiative of the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Children and Families, provides comprehensive services to youth, ages 12 to 17, with behavioral health needs. Services are intended to reduce the need for out-of-home care, particularly congregate care (group homes and institutions), and keep youth safely in their own homes and communities.

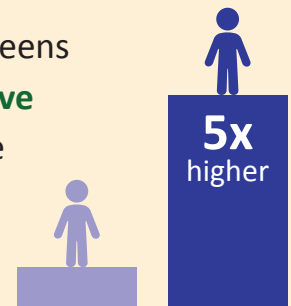
## Why must we work together to improve outcomes for youth in West Virginia?

The statistics are alarming. While experts recommend that youth be cared for in the most family-like setting possible,<sup>1</sup> too many West Virginia teens enter and languish in group homes.

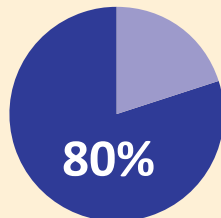
West Virginia has the **highest rate** of children entering foster care in the United States: **8.6 children per 1,000**.<sup>2</sup>



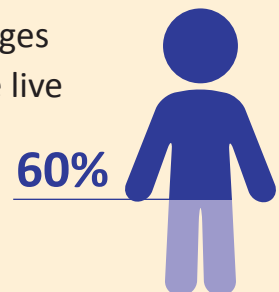
Entry rates for older teens in West Virginia are **five times higher** than the national rate.<sup>3</sup>



Approximately **80 percent** of teens enter foster care because of a “child behavior problem.”<sup>4</sup>



**60 percent** of youth, ages 13 to 17, in foster care live in congregate care.<sup>5</sup>



<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children’s Bureau. (2015). A National Look at the Use of Congregate Care in Child Welfare. Retrieved from [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/cbcongregatecare\\_brief.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/cbcongregatecare_brief.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), Fiscal Year (FY) 2012.

<sup>3</sup> AFCARS, FY 2012.

<sup>4</sup> AFCARS, FY 2013.

<sup>5</sup> AFCARS, FY 2013.

## How are we changing services to better meet needs?

### Traditional Approach

Youth were placed in congregate care in response to behavioral problems.

### New Approach

Communities recognize the impact of trauma, and families are engaged in planning for services. Services are offered to address complex needs, while youth remain or return home safely.

Safe at Home West Virginia offers youth and their families:

- **Trauma-informed assessments** to identify needs
- **Wraparound services** that are individualized and coordinated
- **Evidence-based services and supports** to improve outcomes

## What role do community partners play?

To succeed, youth-serving organizations must share in our commitment to offer services and supports as a safe alternative to foster care. Our partners include:

- Family members and youth
- Community-based organizations
- Schools
- Child welfare agencies
- Judges and court personnel
- Probation agencies
- Behavioral health service providers

## What can we expect for the future?

By changing the ways we serve youth and their families, West Virginia will:

- Reduce the number of youth in congregate care
- Promote strong, permanent connections between youth and their families and communities
- Enhance youth and family health, mental health, and well-being

## How can you get involved?

To find out more and join efforts to help youth and families in your community:

 Email: [SafeatHome@wv.gov](mailto:SafeatHome@wv.gov)  Visit: <http://safe.wvdhhr.org>