

**ANN & ROBERT H. LURIE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF CHICAGO  
STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF COOK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
RESOLUTION URGING THE ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO PASS HB 172 TO RESTORE JUDICIAL  
DISCRETION IN THE TRANSFER OF JUVENILES TO ADULT COURT**

**Legislation and Intergovernmental Relations Committee**

**Monday, February 9, 2015**

**11:00 a.m.**

**Cook County Building**

**Board Room, Room 569**

**118 North Clark Street**

**Chicago, Illinois**

**Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago and its violence prevention collaborative Strengthening Chicago's Youth (SCY) strongly support HB 172 and the Cook County Board of Commissioners Resolution Urging the Illinois General Assembly to Pass HB 172 to Restore Judicial Discretion in the Transfer of Juveniles to Adult Court.** This support is grounded in Lurie Children's institutional position on violence prevention, which supports "juvenile justice policies that reflect evidence regarding adolescent development," and SCY's policy recommendation for "juvenile justice policies in all settings that reflect evidence regarding adolescent development, including knowledge about the impact of trauma." The evidence here is clear: automatic transfer of juveniles to adult court harms children and provides no public safety benefit.

***Harm to Children:*** In its 2011 policy statement "Health Care for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System," the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) raises concerns about laws that automatically transfer juvenile to adult court and summarizes the research on the topic. Juveniles incarcerated in adult prisons are 8 times more likely to commit suicide, 5 times more likely to be sexually assaulted, and twice as likely to be attacked with a weapon by other inmates or beaten by staff as those in juvenile facilities. The AAP also notes that adult jails and prisons place less emphasis on rehabilitation and family support—critical needs for youth offenders—than juvenile facilities do. The AAP recommends—and Lurie Children's and SCY concur—that "Children and adolescents should be detained or incarcerated only in facilities with developmentally appropriate programs and staff trained to deal with their unique social, recreational, and supervisory needs."

***Lack of Public Safety Benefit:*** The Community Preventive Services Task Force, administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, sets the "gold standard" for evidence-based public health policy in the US. The Task Force recommends against policies facilitating the transfer of juveniles to adult justice systems. This recommendation is based on "strong evidence that these laws and policies are associated with increased subsequent violent behavior among transferred youth" and "insufficient evidence to determine whether juveniles in the general population are deterred from violent crime." In reviewing the evidence, the Task Force found that transferred youth were 34% more likely to be re-arrested for violent crimes than those retained in the juvenile justice system.

**Lurie Children's and SCY urge elimination of automatic transfer and adoption of the resolution.**

For more information on Lurie Children's and SCY's position on automatic transfer or involvement in other juvenile justice or violence prevention efforts, please contact SCY Director Rebecca Levin, MPH, at [rlevin@luriechildrens.org](mailto:rlevin@luriechildrens.org) or 312-227-6948.