

**OKLAHOMA COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH
OFFICE OF JUVENILE SYSTEM OVERSIGHT**

Name and Location of Facility: Central Oklahoma Juvenile Center
Tecumseh, Oklahoma

Dates of Visit: November 27 and 28 and December 11, 2006

Oversight Reviewers: Ellen Harwell, April Simmons, and Tina Pendergraft,
Oversight Specialists; Mark James, PARB
Coordinator; and Kevin Rodgers, Programs Manager

Subject: Biannual Unannounced Visit

Date: May 15, 2007

Introduction

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) conducted an unannounced visit of the Central Oklahoma Juvenile Center on November 27, November 28, and December 11, 2006. The last day of the visit had to be postponed due to inclement weather. The focus of the visit was to assess compliance with established responsibilities.

Persons Interviewed

- Entry interview and an exit conference with administrative staff
- Twenty-six female residents
- Six staff members from the female program

Documents Reviewed

- Facility policy and procedures
- Office of Juvenile Affairs Rules
- American Correctional Association (ACA) Standards
- Most recent inspection reports by the Oklahoma State Department of Health, the Division of Child Care of the Department of Human Services, and the Office of the Oklahoma State Fire Marshal
- Files on two residents
- Four staff files

Areas Toured

- Entire facility

Findings

The OJSO conducted a focused oversight of the female program. Due to the facility's improvements in gender specific programming for female offenders, the program needed to be evaluated separately from the male population. The female residents are housed on two units, Garren West and Garren East. The entire facility was toured, but resident interviews were conducted with female residents only. The DHS Division of Child Care visited the facility on the last day of the oversight visit, December 11, 2006. Additional resident files were not reviewed, due to DHS licensing conducting file reviews and issuing a report of findings.

All twenty-six of the residents interviewed were fifteen years of age or older. One percent (1 of 26) was fifteen years old, twenty-seven percent (7 of 26) were sixteen years old, and thirty-five percent (9 of 26) each were seventeen or eighteen years old. Lengths of stays at the facility ranged from one month to over a year.

All of the staff members interviewed worked with the female residents. The staff members interviewed had been employed by the facility for at least one year, with one exception. Half of the staff members interviewed reported previous experience in working with juveniles.

Resident Interviews

Twenty-six female residents were interviewed. Very early in the interview process, concerns emerged on Garren West, due to the residents' consistent and adamant reports of verbal abuse. Therefore, additional residents were interviewed from Garren West. Resident reports were not combined and, instead, are reported by unit.

Garren West

- All nineteen residents interviewed reported they received a copy of the resident's rights, written program information, and rules upon admission.
- Thirty-seven percent (7 of 19) reported the information received was also explained.
- Seventy-four percent (14 of 19) reported they received enough food to eat.
- Forty-seven percent (9 of 19) reported additional helpings of food were allowed.
- Residents interviewed were asked to rate the food on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being "great." Forty-seven percent (9 of 19) of residents rated the food as 3. There were no ratings above 3.
- Ninety-five percent (18 of 19) reported the use of group punishment.
- Thirty-seven percent (7 of 19) reported having been physically restrained.
- Eighty-nine percent (17 of 19) were able to state issues identified on their treatment plans.
- Sixty-eight percent (13 of 19) reported receiving individual counseling.
- All nineteen residents interviewed reported receiving substance abuse treatment.

- Thirty-two percent (6 of 19) reported receiving family counseling.
- Twenty-six percent (5 of 19) reported receiving independent living services.
- Twenty-one percent (4 of 19) reported receiving job training.
- All nineteen residents reported having filed one or more grievances.
- Fifty-eight percent (11 of 19) reported the grievance process did not work. None of the interviewees said the grievance process worked. Other comments from residents included “sometimes” or “depends.”
- Ninety-five percent (18 of 19) reported staff members had used curse words when addressing them.
- Forty-seven percent (9 of 19) reported being assaulted by other residents. There were no reports of physical assaults by staff members.
- One resident interviewed reported being sexually assaulted by a staff member (the investigation was ongoing at the time of the oversight).
- Forty-seven percent (9 of 19) reported they felt safe at the facility.
- Twenty-six percent (5 of 19) were able to identify something they liked about staff members.

Garren East

- All seven residents interviewed reported they received a copy of the resident’s rights, program information, and rules upon admission.
- Forty-three percent (3 of 7) reported the information received was also explained.
- Seventy-one percent (5 of 7) reported they received enough food to eat.
- Eighty-six percent (6 of 7) reported additional helpings of food were allowed.
- Residents interviewed were asked to rate the food on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being “great.” Three residents rated the food as 2, and the remaining four rated the food as 3.
- All seven residents interviewed reported the use of group punishment.
- Seventy-one percent (5 of 7) reported having been physically restrained.
- All seven residents interviewed were able to state issues identified on their treatment plans.
- Eighty-six percent (6 of 7) reported receiving individual counseling.
- All seven residents interviewed reported receiving substance abuse treatment.
- Eighty-six percent (6 of 7) reported receiving family counseling.
- Fifty-seven percent (4 of 7) reported receiving independent living services.
- Fifty-seven percent (4 of 7) reported receiving job training.
- All seven residents interviewed reported having filed a grievance.
- Twenty-nine percent (2 of 7) reported the grievance process did not work. The same percentage reported the process did work. Other comments from residents included “sometimes” or “depends.”
- Forty-three percent (3 of 7) reported staff members had used curse words when addressing them.
- Forty-three percent (3 of 7) reported witnessing staff members curse at other residents.

- Seventy-one percent (5 of 7) reported being assaulted by other residents. One resident reported being assaulted by staff, which was reported and investigated.
- Forty-three percent (3 of 7) reported being sexually assaulted. Two reported that staff members were the perpetrators; the incidents were previously reported and investigated and the staff members no longer had contact with the female residents.
- Fifty-seven percent (4 of 7) reported they felt safe at the facility.
- Eighty-six percent (6 of 7) were able to identify something they liked about staff members.

Staff Interviews

Six staff members were interviewed. The OJSO noted:

- Sixty-seven percent (4 of 6) of the staff members interviewed reported having been involved in a restraint.
- Thirty-three percent (2 of 6) of the staff members interviewed reported being injured during a restraint.
- Sixty-seven percent (4 of 6) reported seeing a resident injured during a restraint.
- All six staff members interviewed reported they received enough information about the residents to provide appropriate care.
- All six staff members reported that residents were allowed additional servings of food.
- When asked about the reporting of abuse, all six staff members reported they would inform their supervisors and/or the Police Officer Supervisor.
- Sixty-seven percent (4 of 6) reported their input was valued by administration.

Grievances

The grievance logs for the months of September, October, and November 2006 were reviewed for the entire facility (male and female programs). The OJSO noted:

September 2006

- Fifty-three percent (54 of 101) of the grievances filed met the three-day time frame for resolution.
- Four grievances were appealed to the superintendent, and three met the five-day time frame for resolution.

October 2006

- Fifty-seven percent (79 of 139) of the grievances filed met the three-day time frame for resolution.
- Eleven were appealed to the superintendent, and nine met the five-day time frame for resolution.

November 2006 (with due dates prior to the day the oversight visit began)

- Sixty-seven percent (53 of 79) of the grievances filed met the three-day time frame for resolution.
- Four were appealed to the superintendent, and three met the five-day time frame for resolution.

Review of Resident Files

The DHS Division of Child Care conducted a visit to the facility during the last day of the oversight visit. The Program Field Representative reviewed resident files and issued a violation report. Two additional files were reviewed by the OJSO and noted:

- One file did not contain receipt of the juvenile handbook by the resident.
- The Comprehensive Treatment Plan was completed within thirty days but did not contain a signature page.
- One file did not contain monthly treatment plan reviews for April, July, September, October, and November 2006, as required by facility policy.

Review of Staff Files

Five staff files were reviewed and no violations were noted.

Observational Tour

The OJSO toured the entire facility, and violations were reported at that time. A response from the facility has been received.

Summary

The female offender program has emerged as a unique program. The program is gender specific to better meet the needs of female offenders. Due to the differing programs between male and female offenders, information from this oversight cannot be compared to previous oversights where both male and females residents were interviewed and combined for reporting purposes.

The residents on Garren West voiced the most complaints regarding verbal abuse. Specific information was provided to the superintendent at the time of the exit conference. A large percentage of residents on Garren West reported feeling verbally abused by staff members. Residents were able to give specific and consistent examples of the language used by staff. A finding is being made, due to the large number and consistency of the residents' reports. Group punishment reports were also high, but residents were not consistent in examples regarding group punishment nor did the OJSO receive the same volume of examples. The majority of the examples that

were given could be considered necessary to maintain the safety of other residents, such as quiet time for residents when another juvenile's behavior was escalating. All residents were extremely positive in their remarks regarding the drug and alcohol program. The residents reported drug and alcohol groups were consistent, and several reported that the drug and alcohol counselor also conducted their family therapy sessions.

The percentage of grievances meeting the initial three-day time frame for resolution ranged from fifty-three to sixty-seven percent. OJA rule OAC 377:3-1-28, (a), (5), states, "If the grievance is not resolved within three working days, the juvenile may appeal to the supervisor." Therefore, the rule does not explicitly state that the staff "shall" meet with the resident within three days. If the three-day time frame is not met, the juvenile has the right to appeal. All appealed grievances were assigned to the superintendent of the facility. OJA rule OAC 377:3-1-28 states, "The supervisor shall have five days from receipt of the grievance to resolve the grievance." During October, September, and November 2006, nineteen grievances had been appealed to the superintendent. Fifteen of the nineteen grievances met the five-day time frame for resolution.

Violations

1. The OJJO could not find documentation of receipt of the juvenile handbook in one file. COJC policy, Procedure CO30300.01, II, A, in part, states, "Signed acknowledgement of receipt of the rulebook is maintained in the juvenile's file."
2. One file contained an Individualized Treatment Plan without a signature page. DHS licensing standards, Section 154, Social services, (b), Service planning, (1), Comprehensive service plan, (B), (vi), states the service plan contains "the names and signatures, with the date, of those participating in developing the service plan."
3. The OJJO could not locate treatment plan reviews for April, July, September, October, and November 2006 in one juvenile file. COCJ policy, Procedure CO50200.02, (II), states, "The individualized treatment plan shall be reviewed monthly. . . ."
4. Residents on Garren West living unit had been subjected to verbal abuse. COJC policy, Procedure CO30400.01, (IV), Protection From Harm, (A), in part, states, "Juveniles have the right to not be subjected to personal abuse, corporal punishment, personal injury, disease, property damage, and harassment."
5. Fifty-eight percent of the residents interviewed reported feeling that the grievance process did not work. Although the superintendent has shown improvement in meeting the five-day time frame for resolution, residents continue to report a low level of confidence in the system. Office of Juvenile Affairs Rules, OAC 377:3-1-28, General grievance procedures, (a), Informal grievances, (6), states, "The supervisor shall have five days from receipt of the grievance to resolve the grievance."

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