

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

Name and Location of Facility: Southwest Oklahoma Juvenile Center
Manitou, Oklahoma

Date of Visit: June 26, 2007

Oversight Reviewer: Ellen Harwell

Oversight Review Team: April Simmons, Cliff Aldridge, and
Ellen Harwell,
Oversight Specialists

Focus of Visit: Unannounced Routine Visit

Date: December 5, 2007

Introduction

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) conducted a routine, unannounced visit on June 26, 2007, of the Southwest Oklahoma Juvenile Center in Manitou, Oklahoma. The facility is a medium secure rehabilitation program for male juveniles adjudicated Delinquent or Youthful Offender who are in the custody of the Office of Juvenile Affairs (OJA). The focus of the visit was to assess compliance with established responsibilities and facility procedures as well as to assess the residents' perceptions of safety, program services, resident rights, discipline practices, and other residential issues. The facility is licensed for 78 residents. The census the day the oversight visit began was 76.

Interviews Conducted

- Entry conference with administrative staff
- Exit conference with the superintendent and administrative staff
- Seventeen male residents
- Seven staff members

Documents Reviewed

- Six personnel records
- Training records for nine employees
- Six resident records
- Grievance logs for March, April, and May 2007
- Office of the State Fire Marshal inspection report, dated April 24, 2007

- Oklahoma State Department of Health inspection report, dated March 6, 2007
- Department of Human Services (DHS) Division of Child Care Facility inspection form, dated January 24, 2007
- DHS Office of Client Advocacy's quarterly report of incidents

Findings

Juvenile Interviews

The OJSO interviewed 17 male residents. All of the residents were 13 years of age or older. The average age of residents was 17.1. Eighty-two percent (14 of 17) were 16 years of age or older. Forty-seven percent (8 of 17) were 18 years of age or older. Reported length of stays at the facility ranged from two months to three years. The OJSO noted the following:

- All residents reported they received a copy of resident rights upon admission. The same percentage reported receiving written notification of policies regarding visitation, mail, phone calls, gifts, discipline, etc.
- Ninety-four percent (16 of 17) reported the information received upon admission was also explained to them.
- Seventy-six percent (13 of 17) reported previous admissions to other facilities. None of the residents interviewed reported prior placement at the LE Rader Center or Central Oklahoma Juvenile Center.
- Ninety-four percent (16 of 17) reported they received enough food.
- Fifty-three percent (9 of 17) reported additional helpings of food were allowed if residents desired them.
- Residents were asked to rate the food on a scale of one to five with five being "great". The two most frequent ratings were two and three. Twenty-four percent (4 of 17) rated the food as a two. Forty-one percent (7 of 17) rated the food as a three. Twelve percent (2 of 17) rated the food as two. Eighteen percent (3 of 17) rated the food as four, and one resident gave the food a rating of six.
- Eighteen percent (3 of 17) reported having been physically restrained within the last six months.
- Forty-seven percent (8 of 17) reported the use of group consequences within the last six months.
- All residents reported having an individualized treatment plan.
- Forty-seven percent (8 of 17) reported they participated in the development of the treatment plan.
- Twenty-nine percent (5 of 17) reported receiving individual counseling.
- Seventy-one percent (12 of 17) reported receiving substance abuse treatment.
- Twenty-four percent (4 of 17) reported receiving family counseling.
- Residents were asked who did the majority of the talking in group. Twelve percent (2 of 17) reported staff members did most of the talking. Twelve percent (2 of 17) reported residents did most of the talking. Seventy-six percent (13 of 17) reported both residents and staff spoke in group equally.

- Seventy-one percent (12 of 17) reported everyone was encouraged to talk in group.
- Twelve percent (2 of 17) of residents reported receiving job training at the skills center.
- Forty-one percent (7 of 17) reported being taught skills to help them live on their own.
- All residents identified a career goal.
- Eighty-two percent (14 of 17) reported they had shared their career goals with staff members.
- Eighty-two percent (14 of 17) had filed a grievance.
- Twenty-four percent (4 of 17) reported the grievance process does work.
- Twenty-nine percent (5 of 17) reported staff members have used curse words when addressing them.
- Forty-seven percent (8 of 17) reported witnessing staff members curse at other residents.
- Thirty-five percent (6 of 17) reported witnessing other residents in possession of dangerous contraband. Types of contraband reported by residents were tobacco, tattoo gun, and lighters. Residents were given the opportunity to make specific statements to be reported to either the Office of Client Advocacy or the facility.

Safety

Residents were asked about physical and sexual assaults. The OJSO noted:

- Thirty-five percent (6 of 17) reported being physically assaulted by other residents.
- One resident reported being assaulted by staff members.
- Of the residents that reported physical assaults, all reported the incidents had been reported and investigated.
- There were no reports of sexual assaults.

Using a Likert scale (Very Frequently, Frequently, Occasionally, Rarely, Very Rarely, and Never), residents were asked how often they felt safe at the facility. The responses were as follows: Very Frequently 29% (5 of 17), Frequently 29% (5 of 17), Occasionally 35% (6 of 17), and one resident reported Never.

Supervision

Residents were asked how often direct care staff members check on them. The options given were Frequently, Occasionally, Rarely, Very Rarely, and Never. Eighty-two percent (14 of 17) of the residents reported that staff members check on them Frequently. Eighteen percent (3 of 17) of the residents reported that staff members check on them Occasionally. Frequently was defined as every 15 to 30 minutes; however, many of the residents that chose Frequently stated that staff members check on them every five or ten minutes.

Residents were also asked how often security officers check on the living units. The options given were Frequently, Occasionally, Rarely, and Never. Seventy-six percent (13 of 17) reported that security officers check on them Frequently. Eighteen percent (3 of 17) reported security officers check the units Occasionally. One resident stated he does not pay enough attention to answer the question.

Staff Interviews

The OJSO interviewed seven direct care staff members. The interview questions pertained to the staff members' perceptions of the rights of residents, discipline policies, and other residential issues. The OJSO noted the following:

- All staff members reported prior experience working with juveniles.
- All reported current training in first aid, CPR, and the behavioral intervention technique used by the facility.
- Eighty-six percent (6 of 7) reported having been involved in a restraint.
- One staff member reported being injured during a restraint.
- Eighteen percent (3 of 7) reported seeing another staff member injured during a restraint.
- One staff member reported seeing a resident injured during a restraint.
- Forty-three percent (3 of 7) reported they receive enough information about the residents to provide appropriate care.
- One staff member reported that residents may have additional servings of food.
- All staff members reported that a group of residents cannot be punished when one or some of them break a rule.
- Twenty-nine percent (2 of 7) reported feeling administrative staff work well with direct care staff.
- Fifty-seven percent (4 of 7) reported feeling their input is valued by the administration.
- All staff members reported that recreation is available to the residents at least once per day.
- Interviewees were asked to classify the morale of staff members as low, medium, or high. The answers were as follows: Low/Medium was reported by one staff member, Medium 57% (4 of 7), and High 29% (2 of 7).
- Interviewees were asked to classify the morale of residents as low, medium, or high. Eighty-six percent (6 of 7) of the staff members rated the morale of residents as medium, and one staff member reported morale for the residents was high.

Resident Files

The OJSO reviewed six resident files. The OJSO noted:

- One resident file lacked an admission summary.

Personnel Files

The OJSO reviewed six personnel files. The OJSO noted the following:

- One file did not contain three references. The file contained two memos (dated 03/15/07 and 06/13/07) from the human resources department asking the employee for a third reference letter.

Training Records

The OJSO reviewed nine training records.

- Two employees did not complete the required 40 hours of training for calendar year 2006.

Grievances

The OJSO reviewed grievance logs for March, April, and May 2007. Appealed grievances are assigned to the superintendent as the supervisor. The OJSO noted:

- March 2007
 - A total of 79 grievances were filed.
 - Thirty-two percent (25 of 79) did not meet the three-day time frame for resolution.
 - Six grievances were appealed to the superintendent.
 - All of the appealed grievances failed to meet the five-day time frame for resolution.
- April 2007
 - A total of 94 grievances were filed.
 - Thirty-six percent (34 of 94) did not meet the three-day time frame for resolution.
 - Thirteen grievances were appealed to the superintendent.
 - One of the appealed grievances failed to meet the five-day time frame for resolution.
- May 2007
 - A total of 115 grievances were filed.
 - Eighteen percent (21 of 115) did not meet the three-day time frame for resolution.
 - Thirteen grievances were appealed to the superintendent.
 - One of the appealed grievances failed to meet the five-day time frame for resolution.

Areas of Concern

1. Eighty-two percent (14 of 17) of residents reported having filed grievances and having low levels of satisfaction with the process. Although the percentage of residents that reported having filed grievances has decreased and satisfaction with the process has increased, the grievances have continued to be an issue. The OJSO recognizes that the juveniles are not likely to express satisfaction when resolutions are not in their favor; however, facility administration should consider whether the process is properly addressing the needs of the juveniles. The facility should carefully evaluate the grievance process for compliance with time frames as well as associated treatment issues.

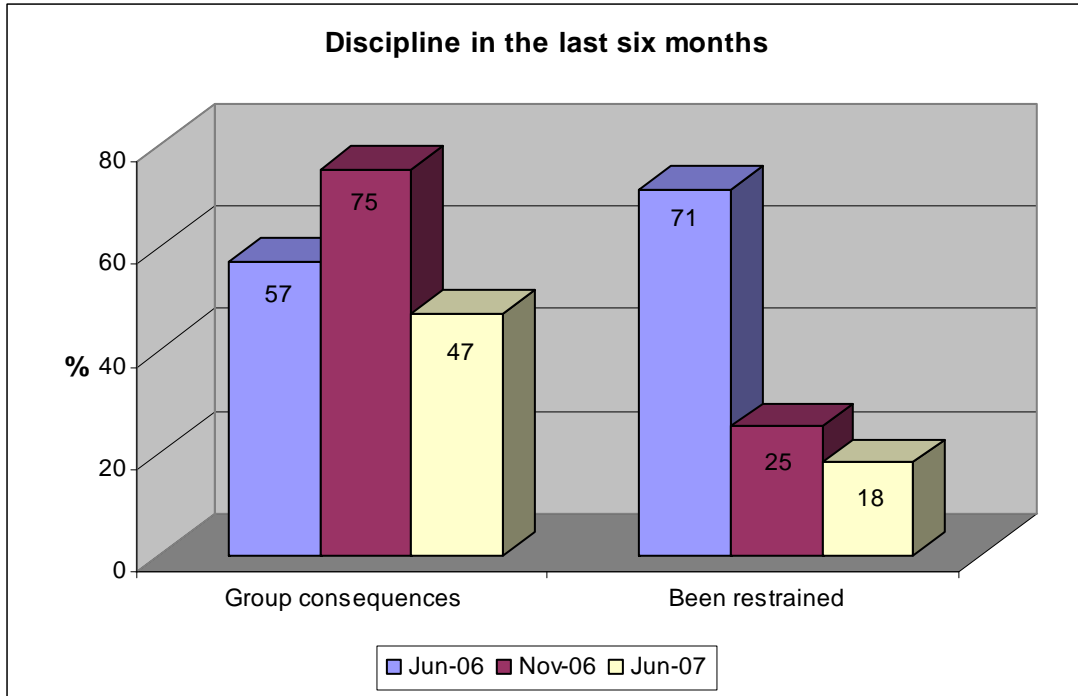
2. Office of Juvenile Affairs Rules, OAC 377: 3-1-28, General grievance procedure, (a), Informal grievances, (5), states, "If the grievance is not resolved within (3) three working days, the juvenile may appeal to the supervisor." Of the three months reviewed, 28% (80 of 288) did not meet the initial three-day time frame for resolution. The facility should strive to meet this time frame.
3. Reports of treatment services provided to the residents declined in all areas during the current oversight visit. It is recommended that facility administration examine what factors may have contributed to this pattern.
4. Only 53% (9 of 17) of residents and one staff member stated that additional servings are permissible, even though allowing additional servings is required by licensing standards.
5. Fifty-seven percent (4 of 7) of staff members interviewed by the OJSO reported they did not receive enough information about residents to provide appropriate care.
6. Only twenty-nine percent (2 of 7) of staff members reported to the OJSO that administrative staff worked well with them. Forty-three percent reported that their input is not valued by administrative staff.

Violations

1. One resident file did not contain the admission summary. Southwest Oklahoma Juvenile Center procedure SW10500.01 (II), (B), states that the juvenile record will contain a "Family and social summary or history, admission summary, disposition or certification study and discharge summaries."
2. One personnel file did not contain three references prior to beginning employment. The Department of Human Services licensing standard 153.1, (g), (1) states, "The facility obtains a minimum of three references for all staff prior to employment."
3. Two training records did not document 40 hours of training for two employees during calendar year 2006. Southwest Oklahoma Juvenile Center procedure SW10400.01, (V), (C) states, "All new juvenile specialists will receive 120 hours of training in addition to orientation training during their first year of employment and 40 hours of training each subsequent year."
4. Grievances appealed to the supervisor (superintendent) did not meet the five-day time frame for resolution. Office of Juvenile Affairs Rules, OAC 377: 3-1-28, General grievance procedure, (a), Informal grievances, (6), states, "The supervisor shall have (5) five days from receipt of the grievance to resolve the grievance."

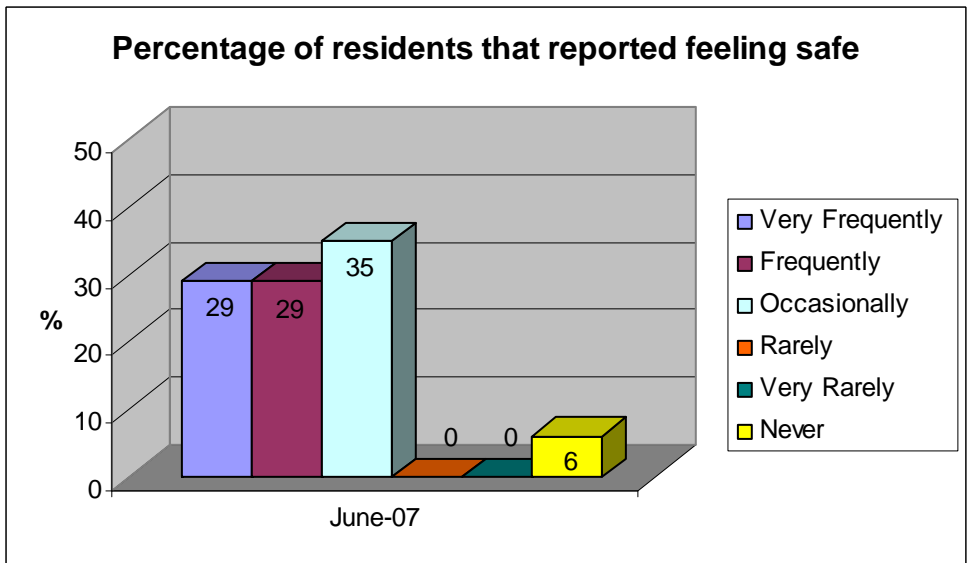
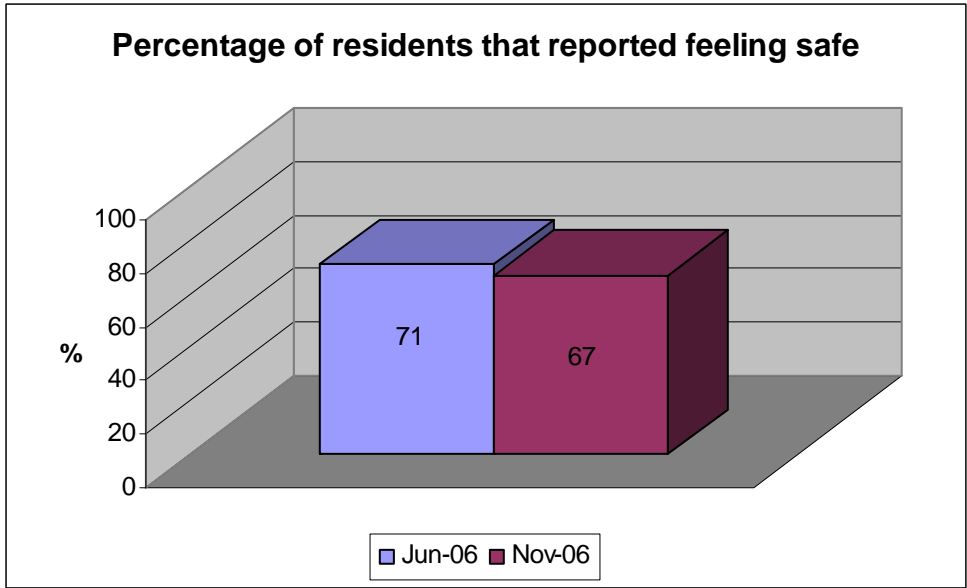
Summary

The following is a comparison of residents' self reports from the last three oversight visits.

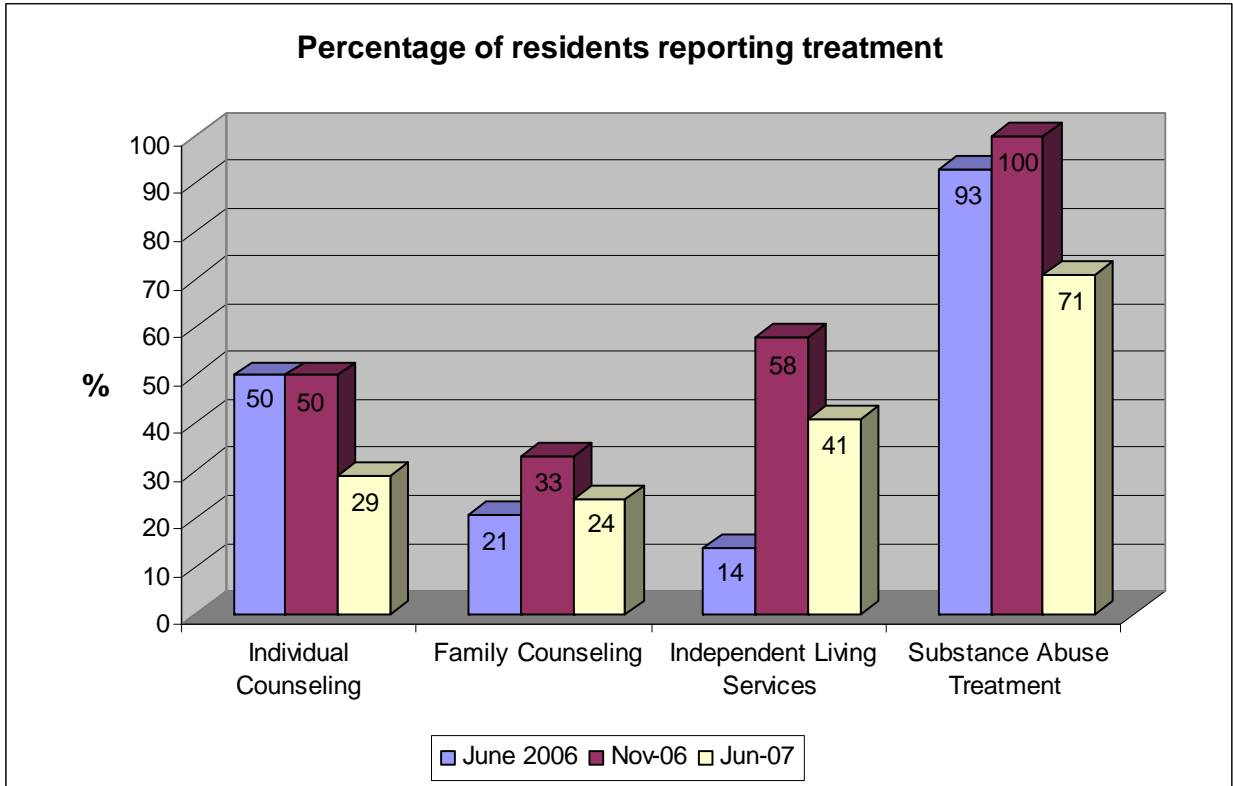


Reports of group punishment declined significantly during this oversight visit. The question was revised changing the term “group punishment” to “group sanctions” prior to the current oversight visit. The term was revised in order to distinguish between actions taken during times of crisis to ensure safety, i.e., having to return to the unit from other activities or being sent to their rooms when one or a group of residents might be exhibiting aggressive or inappropriate behaviors and group sanctions which refers specifically to residents being issued rule violations, denied points, or other consequences for the actions of a few. This clarification appears to have affected residents’ responses when compared to June and November 2006.

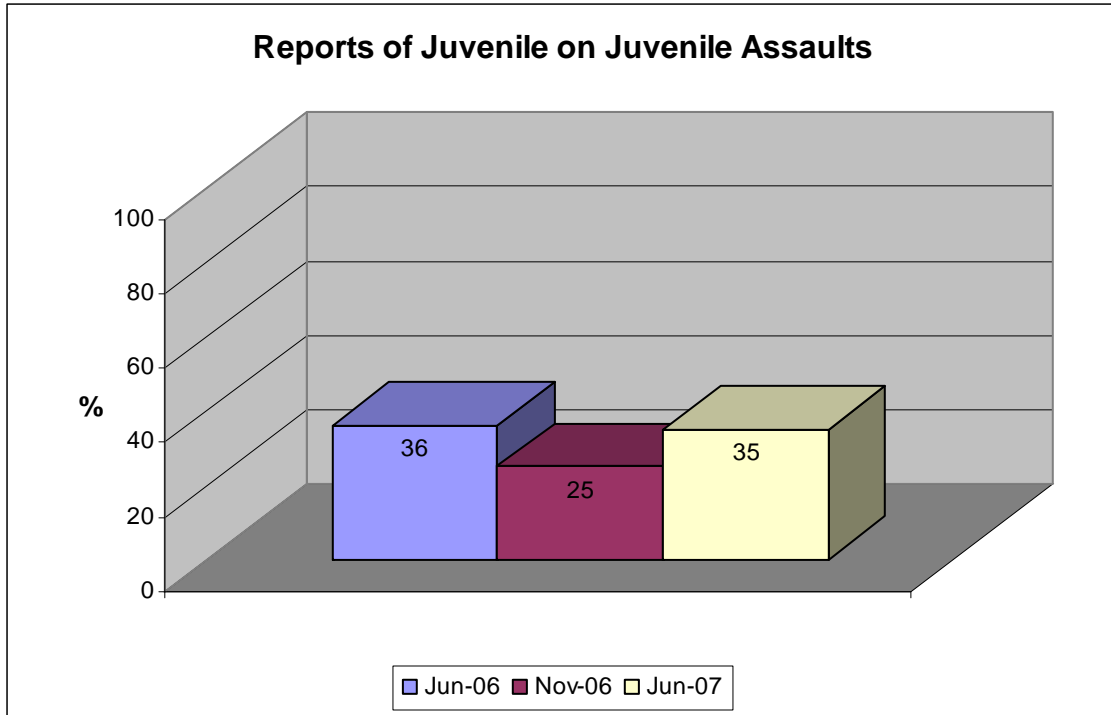
Residents’ reports of restraints have declined over the last three oversight visits. There was a large decline in the number of residents that reported having been restrained in the last six months between June 2006 and November 2006. A smaller decline in this area was seen between November 2006 and the current visit.



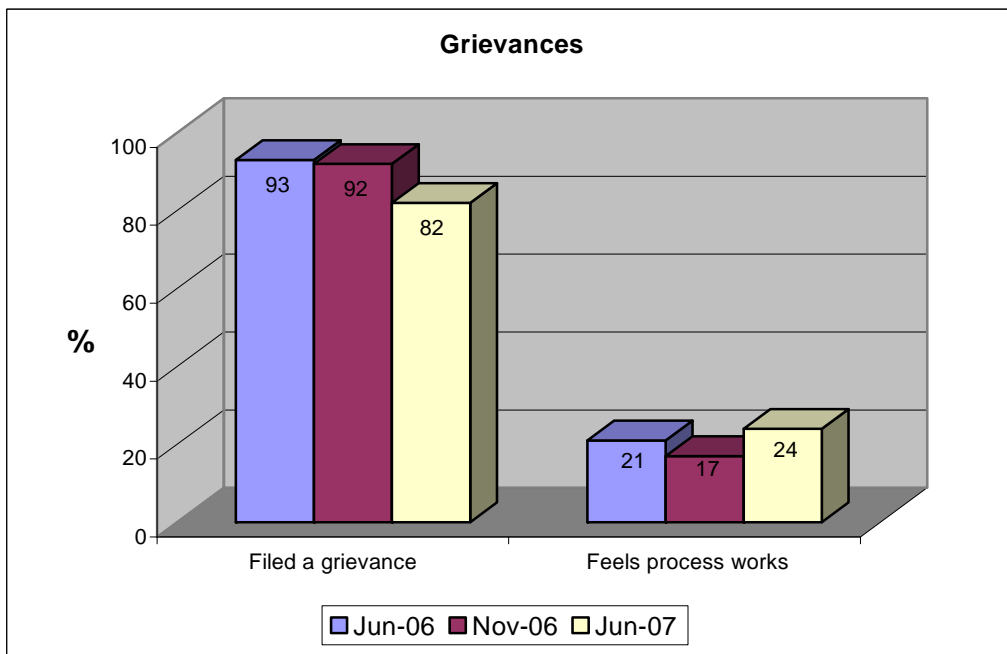
The question of safety was modified from a yes or no question to a Likert scale. In November 2006, 67% of residents reported feeling safe. During the current oversight visit, 58% reported feeling safe very frequently or frequently. During the period measured by the last three oversight visits, the percentage of residents reporting that they feel safe has declined. Although the percentage differences are not large, the decrease is of concern.



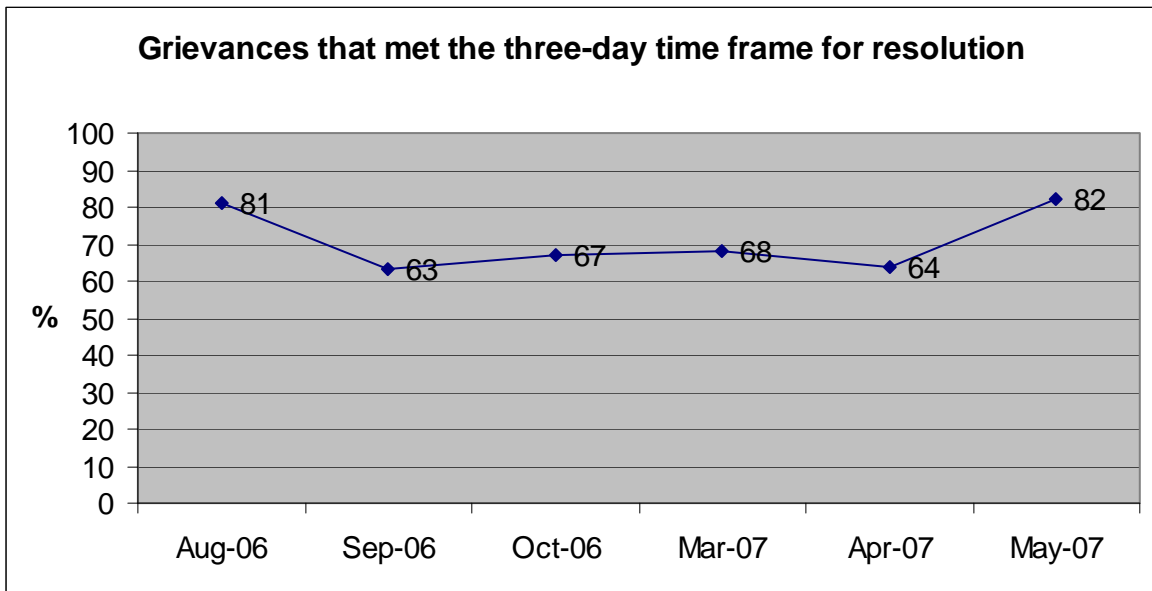
Resident reports of family counseling, independent living services, and substance abuse treatment appeared to peak as of November 2006 visit. The decrease in substance abuse treatment reported is difficult to interpret due to population fluctuations of residents that are assessed to need substance abuse treatment. Other treatment services should not be influenced by fluctuations in the population. Family counseling is a part of preparation of the juvenile's reintegration but can also be conducted at any time during a juvenile's treatment.



Reports of juvenile on juvenile assaults between the June 2006 and June 2007 visits are almost identical. The majority of residents reported staff members check on them every five to ten minutes. The majority of residents stated that facility police officers conduct walk throughs of the living units.



The percentage of residents that reported having filed grievances declined slightly, and the percentage of residents that reported the process worked increased slightly.



When a juvenile files a grievance, it is assigned to a staff member who has three working days to attempt to resolve the matter. Meeting the three-day time frame has been an issue in each month reviewed. The percentage of grievances that met the three-day time frame increased over the three months reviewed during the most recent oversight visit. This may have contributed to the increase in residents' confidence in the system. Time frames for the resolution of grievances should consistently be met in order to ensure the protection of juvenile rights, which could include time sensitive issues.