

**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: December 6, 2007

Oversight Reviewer: Ellen Harwell

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

Focus of Visit: Unannounced Routine Visit

Date: May 7, 2008

Introduction

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OSJO) conducted a routine, unannounced visit on December 6, 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). This was a focused oversight that consisted of staff and juvenile interviews and grievances. The facility is licensed for 78 residents. The census the day of the visit was 77.

Interviews Conducted

- Entry conference with administrative staff
- Exit conference with the superintendent and administrative staff
- Sixteen male residents
- Five staff members

Documents Reviewed

- Grievance logs for September, October, and November 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 November 29, 2007

Findings

Juvenile Interviews

Sixteen residents were interviewed. All of the residents were 14 years of age or older. The average age of residents was 16.9. Ninety-four percent (15 of 16) were 16 years of age or older. Thirty-one percent (5 of 16) were 18 years of age or older, compared to 47% during the previous oversight visit. Fifty-six percent (9 of 16) reported their county of residence was Oklahoma County. Reported lengths of stay at the facility ranged from one week to one year and eight months. The OJSO noted:

- 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, and discipline.
- Eighty-eight percent (14 of 16) reported the information received upon admission was also explained to them.
- Ninety-four percent (15 of 16) reported previous admissions to other facilities. Types of facilities included detention centers, jails, crisis intervention centers, level E group homes, and psychiatric hospitals. None of the residents interviewed reported prior placement at the L.E. Rader Center or the Central Oklahoma Juvenile Center.
- Eighty-one percent (13 of 16) reported they received enough food.
- Ninety-four percent (15 of 16) reported additional helpings of food were allowed if residents desired them.
- Residents were asked to rate the quality of food on a scale of one to five, with one being the worst and five being the best. Residents' ratings were as follows: 2 – 25%, 3 – 50%, 4 – 25%.
- Forty-four percent (7 of 16) reported having been physically restrained within the last six months.
- Twenty-five percent (4 of 16) reported the use of group sanctions within the last six months. Residents did not provide specific information that could be verified by the OJSO.
- Fifteen of the sixteen residents interviewed reported having an individualized treatment plan. One was a new resident whose treatment plan was not yet due.
- Fifteen of the sixteen residents interviewed reported they participated in the development of the treatment plan. One resident reported he had not yet participated in a treatment plan staffing but was able to report to the OJSO the upcoming date of the treatment plan staffing.
- All residents with treatment plans were able to recall treatment objectives.
- Forty-four percent (7 of 16) reported receiving individual counseling.
- Eight-one percent (13 of 18) reported receiving substance abuse treatment.
- Thirty-eight percent (6 of 16) reported receiving family counseling.
- Nineteen percent (3 of 16) reported receiving job training at the skills center.
- Fifty percent (8 of 16) reported receiving Independent Living Skills counseling.
- Thirty-one percent (5 of 16) reported being required to complete sex offender treatment and stated they have received services.

- Residents were asked how many times a week group sessions or counseling are held. Fifty-six percent (9 of 16) reported group is held one to three times per week. Thirty-eight percent (6 of 16) reported group is held four to six times per week. One resident reported group is held seven or more times per week.
- Residents were asked who did the majority of the talking in group. Thirteen percent (2 of 13) reported staff members did most of the talking. Thirty-eight percent (6 of 16) reported residents did most of the talking. The same percent reported both residents and staff spoke in group equally. One resident stated that it depended on the type of group being conducted, and one resident did not respond.
- Sixty-nine percent (11 of 16) reported everyone was encouraged to talk in group.
- Ninety-four percent (15 of 16) identified a career goal.
- Seventy-three percent (11 of 15) reported they had shared their career goals with staff members.
- All residents reported having filed a grievance.
- Twenty-five percent (4 of 16) reported the grievance process does work. Thirteen percent (2 of 16) reported the process does not work. Fifty-six percent (9 of 16) reported the process sometimes works. One resident stated he was not sure yet if the process worked.
- Sixty-three percent (10 of 16) reported staff members have used curse words when addressing them.
- Sixty-nine percent (11 of 16) reported witnessing staff members curse at other residents.

Supervision

Residents were asked to respond, using a Likert scale, how often direct care staff members check on them while in the dorm area. The options given were Frequently (every 15 to 20 minutes), Occasionally (every 1 to 2 hours), Rarely (every 3 to 4 hours), Very Rarely (every 5 to 6 hours), and Never. All residents reported that staff members check on them frequently.

Residents were also asked how often security officers check on the living units. A Likert scale again was used. The options given were Frequently (every 1 to 2 hours), Occasionally (every 3 to 4 hours), Rarely (every 5 to 6 hours), and Never. Ninety-four percent (15 of 16) reported that security officers check on them frequently. One resident stated occasionally.

Safety

Residents were asked about physical and sexual assaults and the presence of dangerous contraband at the facility. The OJSO noted:

- Fifty percent (8 of 16) reported seeing residents in possession of dangerous contraband. Items included tobacco, lighters, matches, alcohol, tattoo gun, shanks, tiles, and batteries.
- Nineteen percent (3 of 16) reported being physically assaulted by other residents.

- Thirteen percent (2 of 16) reported being assaulted by staff members.
- Of the residents that reported physical assaults, all reported the incidents had been reported.
- All residents denied sexual assaults by peers.
- One resident reported sexual misconduct by a staff member. The youth reported to the OJSO the incident had been reported.

Residents were asked how often they felt safe at the facility. Using a Likert scale (Very Frequently, Frequently, Occasionally, Rarely, Very Rarely, and Never), the responses were as follows: Very Frequently 25% (4 of 16), Frequently 38% (6 of 16), Occasionally 19% (3 of 16), and Never 13% (2 of 16). Residents were asked what contributed to their feeling of safety. The options were staff, facility police officers, peers, or their ability to keep themselves safe (self). Residents could choose more than one and reported the following: Staff 6% (1 of 16); Police Officers 13% (2 of 16); Peers 25% (4 of 16); and Self 81% (13 of 16).

Residents were also asked what contributed to feeling unsafe. Their options were staff members, facility police officers, and peers. Residents could choose more than one. Residents' responses were as follows: Staff 50% (8 of 16); Police Officers 21% (5 of 16); Peers 13% (2 of 16). Seven of the 16 youth reported they felt safe at the facility and stated none of the choices listed made them feel unsafe.

Staff Interviews

The OJSO interviewed five direct care staff members. The interview questions pertained to the staff members' perceptions of the rights of residents, discipline policies, and other residential issues. Length of employment ranged from two years to 11 years. The OJSO noted the following:

- Staff members were asked about their highest level of education. Four reported having earned a high school diploma. One staff member reported earning a GED.
- Four of five 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.
- All staff members reported having been involved in a restraint.
- Three of five staff members reported being injured during a restraint.
- Two of five reported seeing another staff member injured during a restraint.
- Two of five reported seeing a resident injured during a restraint.
- Four of five reported they receive enough information about the residents to provide appropriate care.
- Four of five reported that residents may have additional servings of food.
- Four of five staff members reported that a group of residents cannot be punished when one or some of them break a rule.
- One of five reported feeling administrative staff work well with direct care staff.
- Three of five reported feeling their input is valued by the administration.

- All staff members reported that recreation is available to the residents two or more times per day.
- Interviewees were asked to classify the morale of staff members as low, medium, or high. Four staff members reported morale was low. One staff member reported morale was medium.
- Interviewees were asked to classify the morale of residents as low, medium, or high. Three of five reported the morale of residents as medium. One reported morale was medium to high, and one reported morale of the residents was high.

Safety

Using a Likert scale (Always, Usually, About half the time, Seldom, and Never), staff members were asked if co-workers treated them with respect. Three stated always, and two reported usually. The same scale was used when staff members were asked if they felt their co-workers were willing to put forth as much effort as necessary to get work done. Responses were as follows: Always – 1, Usually – 2, and About half the time – 2. Staff members were asked, “Do you feel safe while at work?” One stated always. Two stated usually, and two stated about half the time. Staff members were asked if they believe the facility is involved in and committed to improving life for the residents. One stated always, and one stated usually. Three reported about half the time.

Staff members were asked how often police officers completed checks of the living units. Two stated every hour. One stated two to three times per shift, and one stated checks occur one time per shift.

Grievances

The OJSO reviewed grievance logs for September, October, and November 2007. Appealed grievances are assigned to the superintendent as the supervisor. The OJSO noted:

- September 2007
 - A total of 192 grievances were filed.
 - Thirty-five percent (68 of 192) did not meet the three-day time frame for resolution.
 - Thirty-one grievances were appealed to the superintendent.
 - Thirty-five percent (11 of 31) of appealed grievances failed to meet the five-day time frame for resolution.
- October 2007
 - A total of 284 grievances were filed.
 - Thirty-two percent (81 of 254) did not meet the three-day time frame for resolution.
 - Forty-one grievances were appealed to the superintendent.
 - Thirty-nine percent (16 of 41) of the appealed grievances failed to meet the five-day time frame for resolution.
- November 2007
 - A total of 212 grievances were filed.

- Thirty percent (64 of 212) did not meet the three-day time frame for resolution.
- Fifty-three grievances were appealed to the superintendent.
- Forty-three percent (23 of 53) of the appealed grievances failed to meet the five-day time frame for resolution.

Areas of Concern

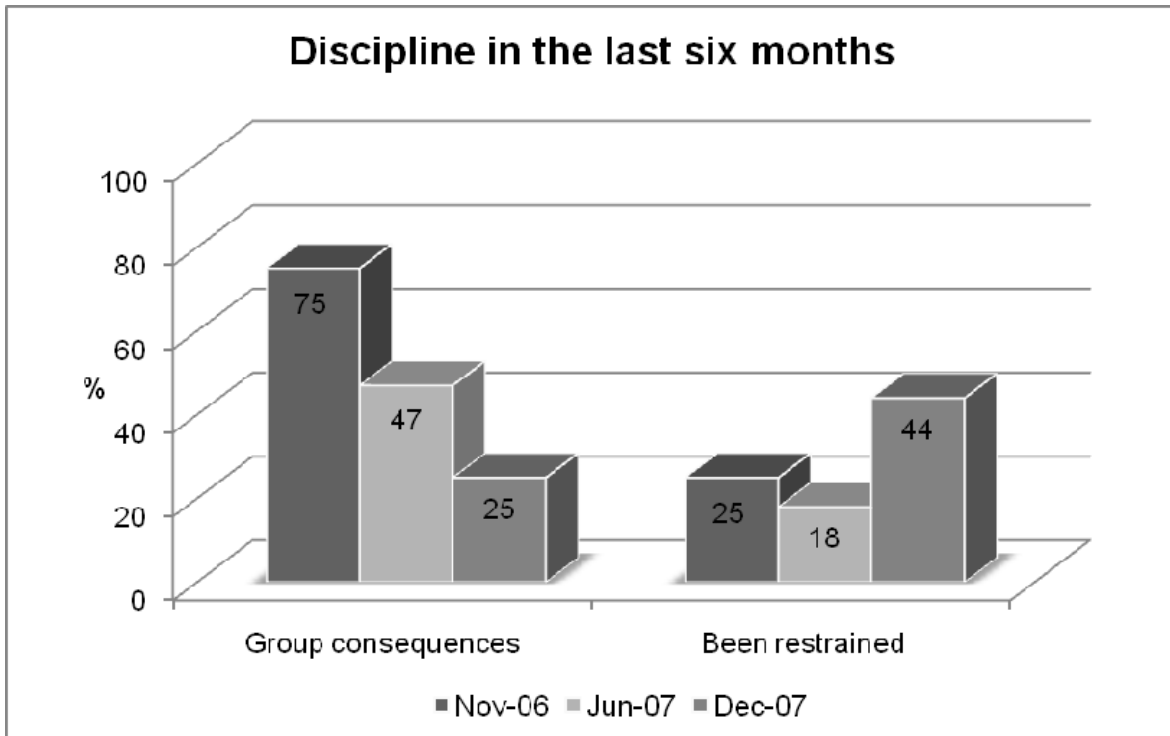
1. Office of Juvenile Affairs Rules, OAC 377: 3-1-28, General grievance procedure, (a), Informal grievances, (5), states, "If the grievance is not resolved within (3) three working days, the juvenile may appeal to the supervisor." Of the three months reviewed, 32% (231 of 658) did not meet the initial three-day time frame for resolution. The facility should strive to meet this time frame.
2. Four of five staff members reported that administrators at the facility do not work well with direct care staff members; however, it should also be reported that three of five staff members reported to the OJSO that the input of direct care staff members is valued by facility administrators.

Violations

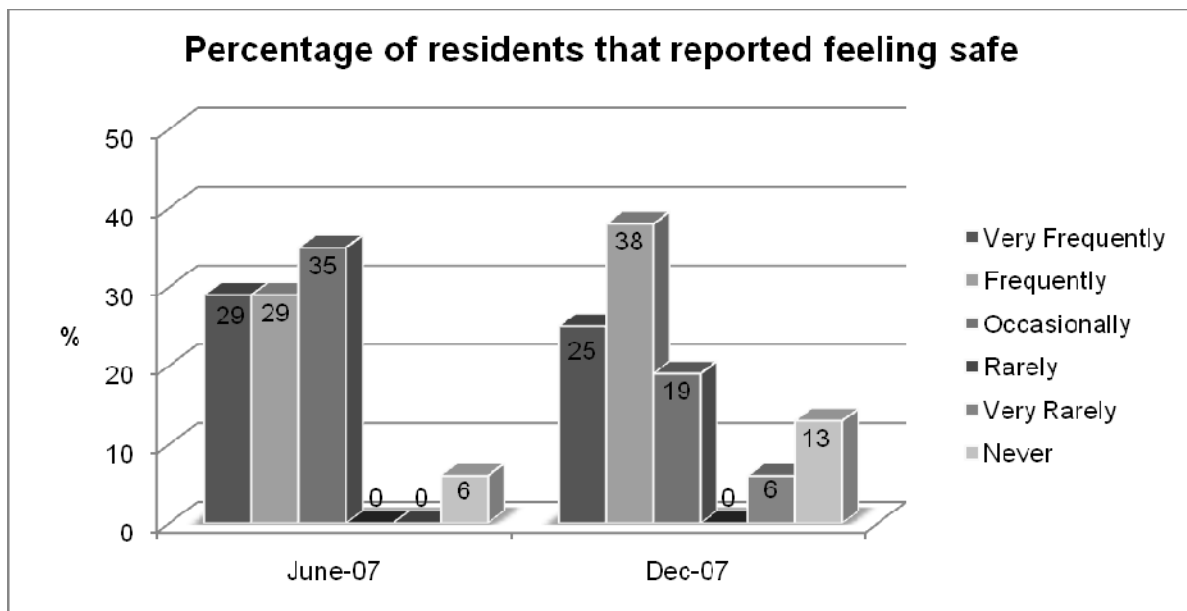
1. Grievances appealed to the supervisor (superintendent) did not meet the five-day time frame for resolution. Office of Juvenile Affairs Rules, OAC 377: 3-1-28, General grievance procedure, (a), Informal grievances, (6), states, "The supervisor shall have (5) five days from receipt of the grievance to resolve the grievance".

Summary

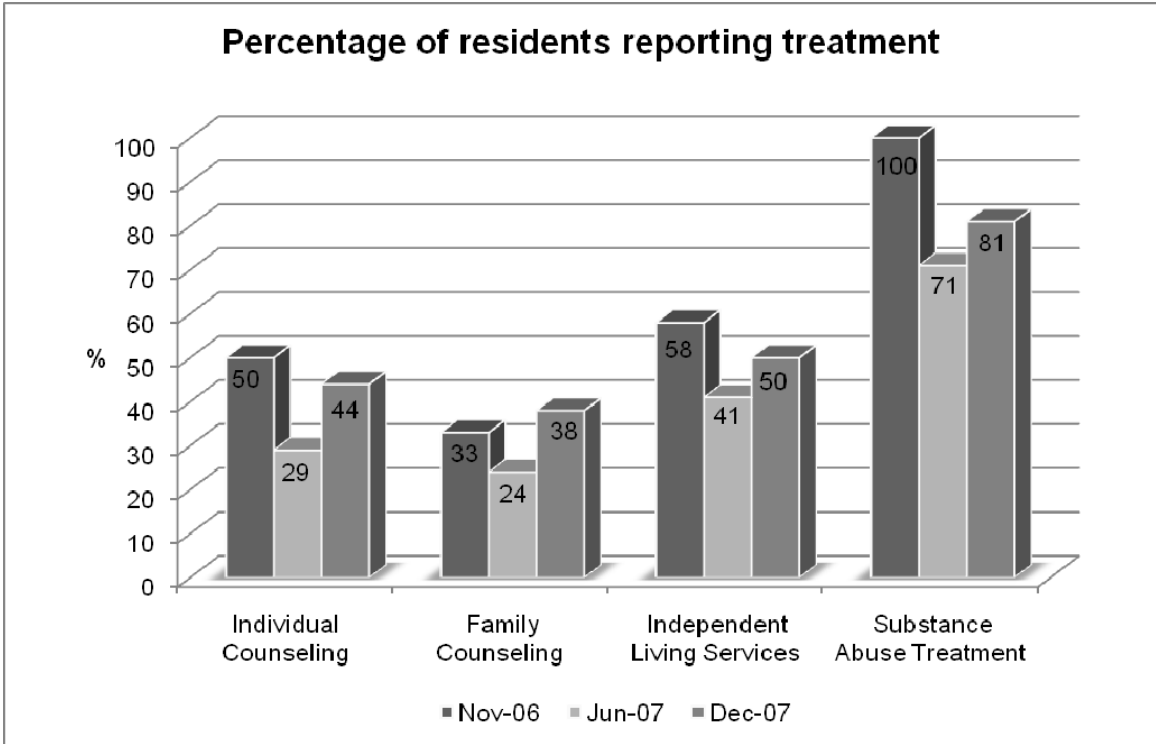
The following is a comparison of residents' self reports from the last three oversight visits.



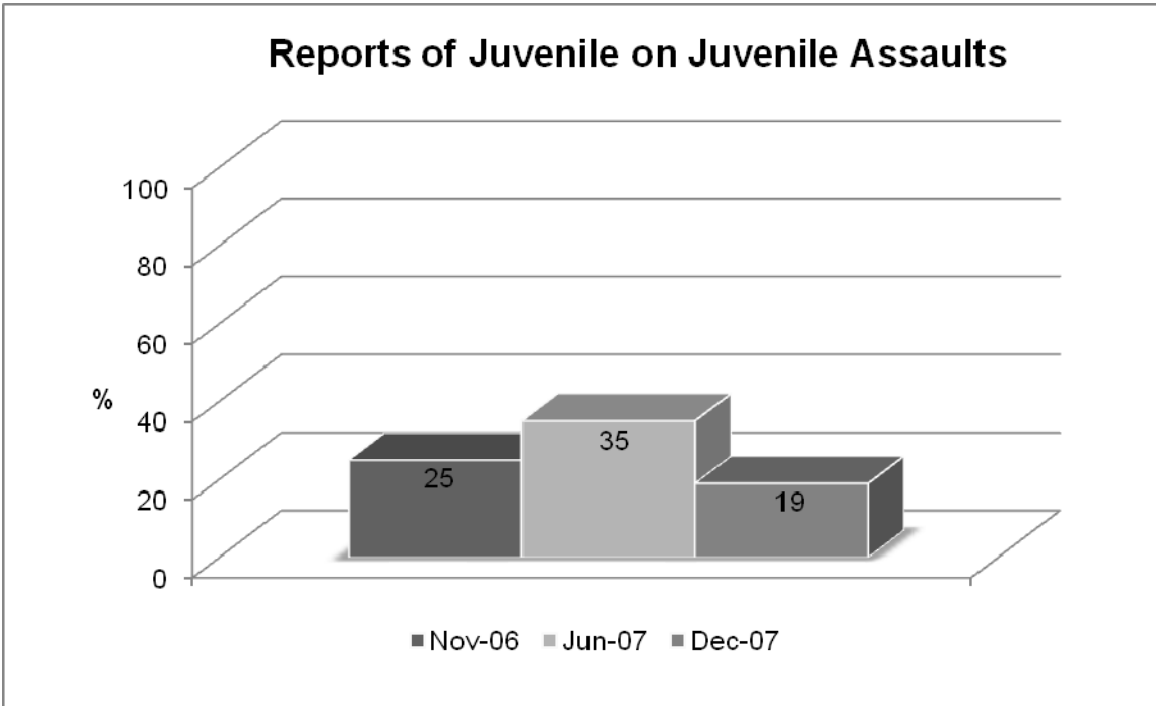
Reports of group consequences have declined over the last three oversight visits. Residents' reports of restraints were highest during the current oversight visit.



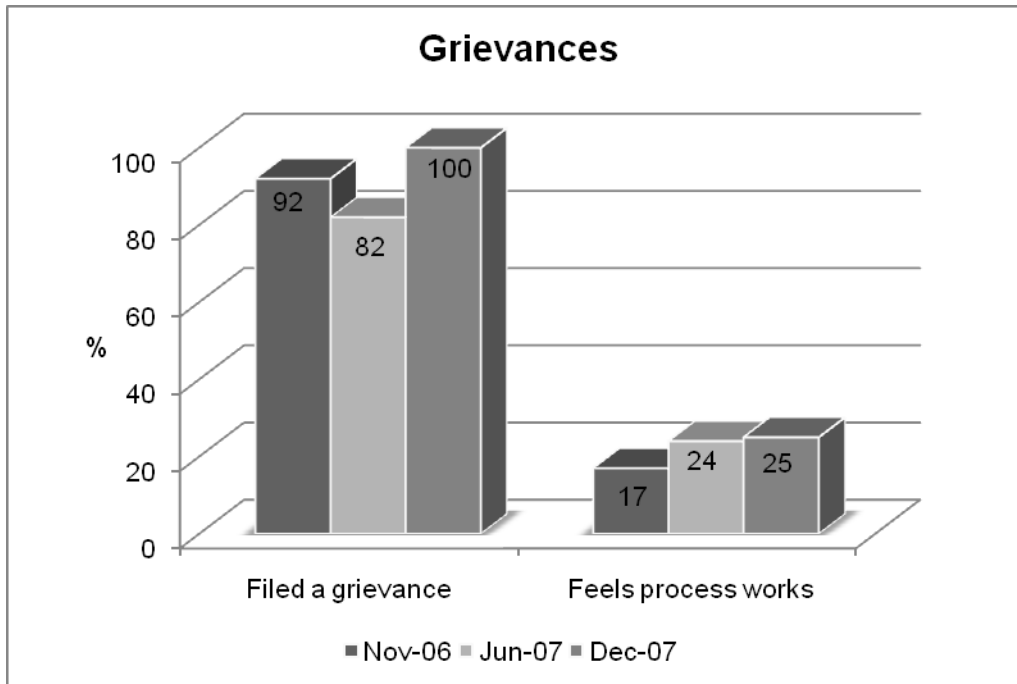
The question of safety was modified from a yes or no question to a Likert scale after the November 2006 visit in which 67% of residents reported they felt safe. The current visit showed an increase in the percentage of residents that reported they never feel safe. A small increase was reported in the percentage of residents that reported they felt safe frequently and very frequently.



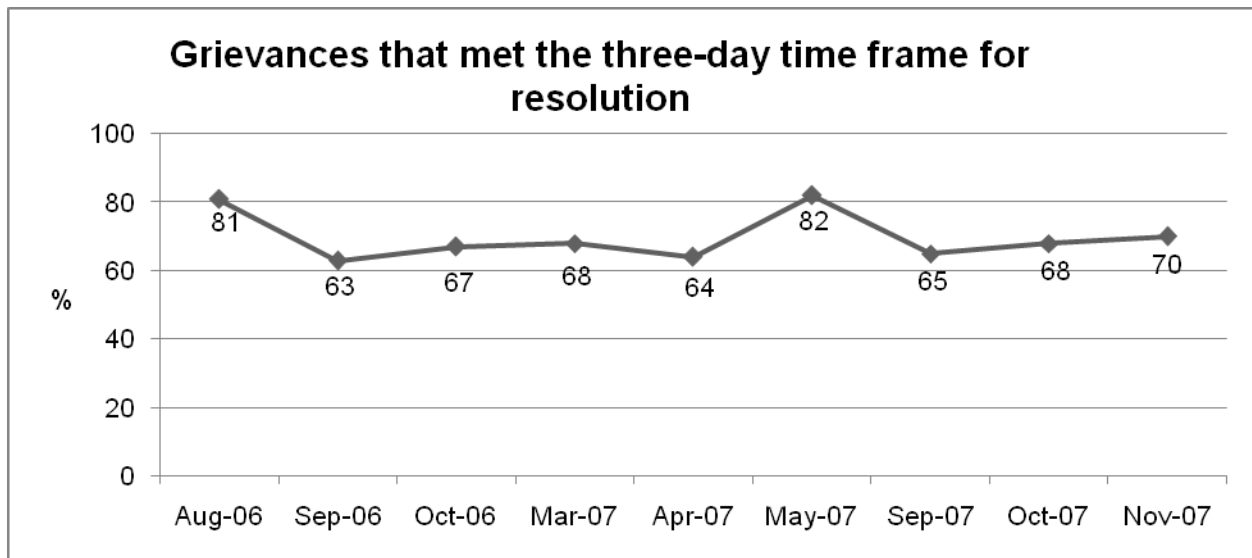
The percentage of residents who reported receiving services increased in all areas from June 2007. Although services increased, percentages are not as high as the November 2006 visit with the exception of family counseling services. All the residents were knowledgeable about their treatment objectives and reported they participated in the development of their treatment plans.



The percentage of residents who reported being assaulted by peers was the lowest during the current oversight visit.



All residents reported having filed a grievance. A quarter of the residents reported that the process works. The question asking residents if the grievance process works was modified from a yes/no question to included a “sometimes” choice given by the interviewer. When “sometimes” was added as a choice, 56% (9 of 16) reported that the process sometimes works. One resident stated he was not sure and, two residents stated adamantly that the process did not work.



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. In the nine months that were reviewed, the percentage of grievances that met the three-day time frame has remained somewhat stable with the exception of two spikes in August 2006 and May 2007. 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.

