



**JUVENILE JUSTICE MONITORING UNIT
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE OF MARYLAND**

2023 SECOND QUARTER REPORT

Maryland Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit (JJMU)

The Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit (JJMU) at the Office of the Maryland Attorney General is responsible for reporting on Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) operated and licensed facilities across the state. Monitors from the unit conduct unannounced visits to these sites to guard against abuse and ensure youth receive appropriate treatment and services.

The mission of the JJMU is to promote the transformation of the juvenile justice system into one that meets the needs of Maryland's youth, families, and communities. This mission is accomplished by collaborating with all who are involved with the system.

The Unit has access to DJS incident and case notes databases and to DJS internal investigation and grievance documents. Monitors spend considerable time gathering information and observing all aspects of operations. We sit in on activities and classes, interview youth, staff and administrators, and review incident-related footage and original incident report documentation. The JJMU issues public reports covering each calendar quarter. These reports include data and analysis concerning treatment of and services provided to youth in DJS detention and placement facilities throughout our state. Formal responses from DJS and the Juvenile Services Education Program (JSEP - which assumed responsibility for education services in DJS facilities at the end of June of 2022) are included within our published reports.

The JJMU has been instrumental in driving positive changes in the Maryland juvenile justice system since its formation in the wake of widespread systemic abuse issues. The activities of the monitoring unit increase the transparency and accountability of the juvenile justice system and raise awareness of the needs of justice-involved Maryland youth. We will continue to push for the adoption of best practices as we evaluate current and emerging research that serves to both enhance public safety and produce positive outcomes for young people in contact with the juvenile justice system.

JJMU 2023 Second Quarter Report Compendium

The Maryland Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit (JJMU) issues public reports covering each calendar quarter that include data and analysis concerning treatment of and services provided to youth in Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) directly run and licensed facilities throughout Maryland. Enclosed please find the unit's compilation of second quarter 2023 facility-specific and system-wide based reports.

The Maryland Department of Juvenile Services' response and a response from the Juvenile Services Education Program are also included in this document, as indicated on the contents page.

The JJMU 2023 Second Quarter Report compendium was produced by Margi Joshi, Nick Moroney, Tim Snyder, and Marvin Stone. Thanks to Taran Henley, Fritz Schantz, and Maria Welker.

We respectfully submit this report to the Governor, members of the Maryland General Assembly, the Secretary of the Department of Juvenile Services, and to the State Advisory Board for Juvenile Services as required under Maryland law.

Current and prior reports of the Maryland Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit and related responses are available at:

<http://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/Pages/JJM/default.aspx>



JUVENILE JUSTICE MONITORING UNIT
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE OF MARYLAND

September 2023

The Honorable Wes Moore, Governor
State of Maryland

The Honorable Bill Ferguson, President of the Senate
Maryland General Assembly

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones, Speaker of the House of Delegates
Maryland General Assembly

Members of the General Assembly

The Honorable Vincent Schiraldi, Secretary
Department of Juvenile Services

Members of the State Advisory Board for Juvenile Services

Dear Governor Moore, Senate President Ferguson, Speaker of the House Jones, Secretary Schiraldi, and State Advisory Board Members:

This report covers the second quarter of 2023 and offers brief updates on conditions in each detention and placement facility operated by and licensed by the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department).

The Department published a comprehensive research document on September 12th, 2023.¹ The data findings highlighted included the following:

- Most categories of youth crime—including violent crime—are below pre-pandemic levels and have generally been declining for more than a decade; and
- While youth crime has primarily declined in recent years, violent gun crime committed *against* young people has increased significantly.

Please see the (unpaginated) special section at the beginning of this report entitled “Juvenile Justice Reform in Maryland” for further details from and about the DJS research document.

While the last JJMU report² detailed a number of positive changes in process or already implemented by DJS leadership and staff, this short report details a need for changes to the longstanding approach to mental health services delivery within DJS-operated facilities.

Steps should be taken to increase the integration of mental health care services provision into all aspects of daily operations at DJS detention and committed placement facilities. Rather than primarily responding following an incident involving aggression or potential self-harm, mental health professionals should conduct ongoing staff training as well as being present for all program services involving youth (including during the school day; when youth are on living units; and during recreation).

Greater involvement by mental health professionals in facility management and operations will assist facility and departmental leadership in the development and implementation of policies and practices through a trauma-informed and therapeutic lens, in order to appropriately balance the focus on security- and control-related issues.

Please see the section on facility-based mental health services on pages four to seven of this report for more details and recommendations.

While the daily provision of facility-based mental health services needs to be substantially boosted, it is important to note that young people with severe, acute and complex mental health problems requiring specialized mental health services cannot be served in carceral settings and yet they continue to be inappropriately placed through the courts and the Department in secure detention and committed placement environments where their conditions often worsen.

¹ The DJS report, including sources and citations, is available at: https://djs.maryland.gov/Documents/MD-DJS-Juvenile-Crime-Data-Brief_20230912.pdf

² JJMU Q1 2023 report, pages 3-6. Available at: https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/JJM%20Documents/23_Quarter1.pdf

The Maryland juvenile justice system cannot become a default component of the Maryland state mental health system. State government and private mental health providers need to bring more substantial resources to bear in order to comprehensively and permanently address ongoing severe shortages of in-patient psychiatric resources and community-based mental health services.

Until this goal is accomplished, many youth facing mental health challenges and in contact with legal authorities in our state are in danger of entering and indefinitely cycling through the deep end of Maryland juvenile and criminal justice systems.

Respectfully submitted,

Nick Moroney

Nick Moroney
Director, Maryland Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit

Cc: Attorney General Anthony Brown
State of Maryland Treasurer's Office
The Office of the Comptroller of Maryland

JUVENILE JUSTICE MONITORING /UNIT 2023 SECOND QUARTER REPORT

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JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM IN MARYLAND

JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM IN MARYLAND

The Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) published a comprehensive research document on September 12th, 2023.³ Some of the findings of this data based DJS report are extracted below:

- Most categories of youth crime—including violent crime—are below pre-pandemic levels and have generally been declining for more than a decade;
- While youth crime has primarily declined in recent years, violent gun crime committed *against* young people has increased significantly;
- There has been an increase in overall juvenile crime in Maryland over the last two years when measured against crime rates at the height of the pandemic, however complaints (representing the number of times children have been referred to DJS by agencies and citizens) are still below pre-pandemic levels and down sharply—by over 50%—over the past decade;
- The proportion of crime and violent crime in Maryland committed by young people is low and decreasing, similar to national rates and historical trends in Maryland. In calendar year 2021, “there were 12 to 13 times as many adults as juveniles arrested for both homicides and overall crime.”
- The number of Maryland youth who are victims of violent crime has increased significantly, with non-fatal shooting of young people quadrupling statewide over the past decade;
- Youth of color are overrepresented in Maryland’s juvenile justice system as incarcerated youth and victims compared to rates in Maryland’s overall youth population, and are also underrepresented in community-based rehabilitation options such as being placed on probation or diversion;
- And, according to 2021 data from the Maryland State Police, 92.6 percent of homicide arrests and 92.9 percent of all arrests in Maryland are of adults while 7.4 percent of homicide arrests and 7.1 percent of overall arrests are of juveniles.⁴

³ The DJS report, including sources and citations, is available at: https://djs.maryland.gov/Documents/MD-DJS-Juvenile-Crime-Data-Brief_20230912.pdf

⁴ Crime in Maryland: 2021 Uniform Crime Report, available at: <https://mdsp.maryland.gov/Document%20Downloads/2021%20Crime%20In%20Maryland%20Book-3.pdf>

The DJS research brief highlights the serious and tragic impact that gun violence has had on children of color and their communities. To begin to address the public health crisis of gun violence in Maryland, DJS has launched comprehensive initiatives targeted towards the young people most in danger of being involved as victims or perpetrators of firearms related offenses.

As the report recognized, “[n]ational research and practice have shown that when interventions are targeted towards the highest risk youth, address the trauma youth experience from either witnessing or being victimized by violence, build on young people’s strengths in a developmentally appropriate manner, and divert lower risk and younger youth, those interventions yield better outcomes for both youth and public safety”.

In addition to providing data, the DJS report also included some details about initiatives undertaken to help address the challenges issuing from the situations illustrated by the data included in the report. For example, the Department has:

1. Launched *The Thrive Academy* focusing wraparound services on youth in Baltimore City and County who are at highest risk of involvement in gun violence; and
2. Initiated Youth Engagement and Safety Strategies Improvement Teams with prosecutors, law enforcement, community leaders, victims, and family members in Baltimore City and County to advise on best approaches to preventing gun involvement by youth in DJS care in their communities.

The report also mentions internal and external reviews of DJS operations and practices and steps taken to address shortcomings uncovered as a result, including:

- A. Reducing idle time and launching evidence-based programming as well as after school and weekend activities for youth in DJS facilities.
- B. Cutting the vacancy rate among front line staff in department facilities by more than half between January and August of 2023.

The Department report included a statement that DJS will continue to “support legislation to hold young people accountable in the juvenile justice system” as opposed to in the adult criminal justice system, because the juvenile system is where “they are mostly likely to thrive” and recidivism rates are lower than in the adult system.

The report mentions that the “percentage of people incarcerated in Maryland’s prisons for crimes committed when they were under age 18 is twice the national average (six percent versus three percent). Nine out of ten people imprisoned in Maryland’s prisons for crimes that they

committed before age 18 are people of color.” According to the report, “prosecuting children as adults has consistently been shown to increase youth crime and violence.”

However, DJS alone cannot be responsible for addressing and dismantling the structural conditions that have contributed to concentrated violence in certain areas of the state and the resulting trauma that young people living in affected communities experience as a result of their exposure to such violence. Collaborations among individual stakeholders and community-based organizations that are focused on providing mental health, education, employment and other resources to under-resourced neighborhoods will be necessary in order to tackle the complex root causes of violent and other crimes.

In recognition of the need for such partnerships, the Department of Juvenile Services committed to “working in partnership with ... the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services and the Department of Human Services to collaboratively invest in neighborhoods throughout Maryland where [DJS’] clients live to not only improve their individual chances of success, but to provide increased opportunities for their neighborhoods as a whole to thrive.”

DJS Hardware Secure Detention

DJS Committed Placement

Short-term, pre-disposition/pending placement:

- Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center (BCJJC)
- Cheltenham Youth Detention Center (CYDC)
- Charles H. Hickey, Jr., School (Hickey)
- Western Maryland Children's Center (WMCC)
- Lower Eastern Shore Children's Center (LESCC)

Long-term, post-disposition:

- Victor Cullen Center (Cullen)
- Backbone Mountain and Green Ridge youth centers (two youth centers)

Incident and Population Trends Inside DJS-Operated Detention Centers and DJS-Operated Committed Placement Facilities

Second quarter 2023 population and incident numbers versus the second quarter of 2022:

- ❖ The average daily population of youth incarcerated in both DJS secure detention and secure committed placement facilities continued to rise during the second quarter as Covid 19-related considerations on the part of justice system stakeholders receded and increasing numbers of children and young people who have been "charged as adults" entered Maryland's courts and carceral systems.
- ❖ The average daily population (ADP) of youth rose in all but one DJS-operated secure detention center (WMCC, where the ADP decreased by one youth): The population at the BCJJC, CYDC, Hickey, and LESCC detention centers all increased in average daily population during the second quarter of this year (when compared with the same period last year). The youth population also (substantially) increased in the DJS-operated committed placement centers (the two Youth Centers and the Victor Cullen Center). **The increases follow and add to similar growth during the first quarter of 2023 compared to the same time period last year.**
- ❖ Together with the population increases, there was an increase in the number of incidents involving youth-on-youth fights in secure detention centers (BCJJC, LESCC and WMCC, CYDC and Hickey), compared to the same period in 2022.
- ❖ Fights and assaults also increased in the committed placement sites (the Youth Centers and Victor Cullen) during the reporting period, when compared with the second quarter of 2022.

- ❖ Continuing the comparison between the number of incidents during the second quarter of 2023 versus 2022: Staff use of physical restraints on youth increased in the committed placement sites (Victor Cullen and the two Youth Centers) – the increases were particularly steep at the Green Ridge Youth Center and the Victor Cullen Center.
- ❖ Physical restraints of youth by staff decreased at the BCJJC, LESCC and WMCC detention centers but increased at the Hickey and Cheltenham (CYDC) detention facilities.
- ❖ The number of incidents involving the use of mechanical restraints (handcuffs and or leg irons) increased substantially in committed placement facilities (the Youth Centers and Victor Cullen) during the second quarter of 2023 when compared with the same period last year.
- ❖ Instances of mechanical restraint usage on youth inside secure detention facilities slightly increased at Hickey, CYDC and LESCC but decreased at BCJJC and WMCC.
- ❖ There were decreases in the number of incidents involving seclusion inside secure detention centers at BCJJC and WMCC but increases at CYDC, Hickey and LESCC. Instances of seclusion also increased in committed placement at the Victor Cullen Center. Seclusion was not used at either of the two youth centers (Green Ridge and Backbone Mountain).
- ❖ There were 27 reports of suicide ideation during the second quarter of 2023 (down from 31 during the same period last year); one reported suicide attempt (versus zero attempts during the second quarter of 2022); and 8 reported instances self-injurious behavior at DJS-operated detention and committed placement facilities during the second quarter of 2023 (compared to 23 reported for the second quarter of 2022).

COVID-19 Response in Juvenile Services' Facilities

With a federal declaration signifying the end of the nationwide COVID-19-related public health emergency in May of 2023, the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) is moving toward resuming more normalized operations inside detention and placement facilities and easing restrictions implemented during the pandemic.

Department medical administrators continue to keep a watchful eye on conditions on the ground and have implemented stricter safety measures for youth and staff during recent sporadic outbreaks of contagious sicknesses.

MAKING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES A PRIORITY INSIDE DJS FACILITIES

Making Mental Health Services a Priority Inside DJS Facilities

The majority of kids involved in the juvenile justice system have mental health-related issues and most have been exposed to traumatic stressors, sometimes chronic, which can contribute to difficulties in behavioral, cognitive, and emotional functioning. There is a need to prioritize the availability of effective evidence-based mental health services for youth in DJS custody. The Department should concentrate on hiring and retaining highly qualified and experienced mental health professionals with a background in providing evidence-based and culturally responsive care to young people.

Steps should also be taken to increase the integration of mental health care services provision into all aspects of daily operations at DJS detention and committed placement facilities. Rather than primarily responding following an incident involving aggression or potential self-harm, mental health professionals should conduct ongoing staff training as well as being present for all program services involving youth (including during the school day; when youth are on living units; and during recreation).

Greater involvement by mental health professionals in facility management and operations will assist facility and departmental leadership in the development and implementation of policies and practices through a trauma-informed and therapeutic lens, in order to appropriately balance the focus on security- and control-related issues.

Incarceration is inherently traumatizing and dehumanizing and can worsen or exacerbate existing mental health issues. Providing mental health professionals with a greater voice in facility operations can also help minimize the psychological harms of imprisonment and assist in providing more individualized care for young people and not the one-size-fits-all and compliance-oriented approach prevalent in correctional settings.

A number of facility-based mental health professionals have commented that they spend much of their time completing paperwork and have limited time to spend processing with incarcerated young people and advising and training staff. They also cite an inability to temporarily remove young people from school in order to provide needed therapeutic sessions as an element that makes it difficult to ensure youth receive an appropriate amount of individualized therapy.

Plans to expand the provision of facility-based mental health services beyond crisis debriefing following aggressive incidents and once-a-week check-ins with youth in detention and committed placement facilities should include mental health clinicians:

- ✓ Meeting daily with all youth (or more often for high needs young people) to assist with coping and psychological functioning;

- ✓ Offering psychoeducational and other skill-based groups on residential units. Even short-term group interventions in detention environments such as TARGET⁵ and CBT-based interventions such as Becoming a Man (BAM)⁶ have been shown to improve behavior and even contribute to a reduction in recidivism;
- ✓ Conducting staff training for direct-care and other personnel about adolescent mental health and providing ongoing guidance on how to create a therapeutic milieu through positive interactions with the youth in their care;
- ✓ Being available in the school building throughout the school day to provide struggling students with behavioral supports and services to increase academic engagement and success; and
- ✓ Serving as a resource to youth and their families through increasing opportunities for family therapy and attending visitation and other events involving youth and family members.

While the daily provision of facility-based mental health services needs to be substantially boosted, it is important to note that young people with severe, acute and complex mental health problems requiring specialized mental health services cannot be served in carceral settings and yet they continue to be inappropriately placed through the courts and the Department in secure detention and committed placement environments where their conditions often worsen.

The Maryland juvenile justice system cannot become a default component of the Maryland state mental health system. State government and private mental health providers need to bring more substantial resources to bear in order to comprehensively and permanently address ongoing severe shortages of in-patient psychiatric resources and community-based mental health services. Until this goal is accomplished, many youth facing mental health challenges and in contact with legal authorities in our state are in danger of entering and indefinitely cycling through the deep end of Maryland juvenile and criminal justice systems.

⁵ Ford, Julian & Hawke, Josephine (May 2012), "Trauma Affect Regulation Psychoeducation Group and Milieu Intervention Outcomes in Juvenile Detention Facilities", *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment, and Trauma*, volume 21, issue 4, pgs. 365-384. TARGET has also been utilized in placement settings. See Marrow, Monique, et. al., "The Value of Implementing TARGET within a Trauma-Informed Juvenile Justice Setting" (November 2013), available at: <https://mha.ohio.gov/static/learnandfindhelp/TreatmentServices/TCC/The-Value-of-Implementing-TARGET-Within-a-Trauma-Informed-Juvenile-Justice-Setting.pdf>

⁶ Stephani Zuo & Wayne Zuo (July 2017), "Juvenile Crime and the Heat of the Moment: A proposal to pilot cognitive behavioral therapy interventions to reduce youth crime and recidivism in Baltimore City", Abell Foundation 2017 Award in Urban Policy, available at: https://abell.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Award202017_07251720print.pdf

DETENTION CENTERS

Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center

The Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center (BCJJC) is a hardware secure (maximum-security) detention center for boys. The Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) owns and operates BCJJC. The DJS-rated housing capacity is 120 young people. Black youth represented 86% and Hispanic/Latino youth represented 7% of the total number of young people entering BCJJC during the second quarter of 2023.

| BCJJC – Selected Incident Categories | Q2 2021 | Q2 2022 | Q2 2023 |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Average Daily Population (ADP) | 35 | 61 | 68 |
| 1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight | 33 | 61 | 74 |
| 2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault | 4 | 7 | 8 |
| 3. Physical Restraint | 45 | 71 | 48 |
| 4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles | 12 | 21 | 8 |
| 5. Seclusion | 16 | 36 | 4 |
| 6. Contraband | 0 | 4 | 1 |
| 7. Suicide Ideation | 2 | 8 | 2 |
| 8. Suicide Attempt | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9. Self-Injurious Behavior | 1 | 2 | 0 |

The average daily population at BCJCC increased by 11% during the second quarter of 2023 when compared with the same time in 2022. When further comparing the same two time periods:

- The number of youth-on-youth incidents involving aggression also increased while staff use of physical restraints and of handcuffs and shackles on youth inside the facility significantly decreased.
- Reported seclusions and incidents involving contraband also dropped substantially.

Group Disturbances

There were numerous instances during the reporting period when a group of youth at BCJCC attacked another group or individual. The frequency and severity of these events together with shortages in available staffing (due to callouts and longer-term absences from the workplace) resulted in a decision by facility managers to periodically restrict movement of youth from residential pods to the school area and other locations within the facility.

In incident 174600, students from one classroom managed to intercept and assault peers from another class as they were being escorted in a hallway. During the incident, several youth kicked one student before staff gained control of the situation. Youth from different residential units were involved in another event (incident 173780) that spilled into a hallway after a staffer opened a classroom door to facilitate student movement to another classroom – one youth assaulted a peer and others joined in and a melee ensued. Incident 174521 also involved youth running out of a classroom to assault youth from another class.

A youth suffered a fractured nose and a black eye in another incident (174558) after a number of his peers took part in an assault on a residential pod.

Mental Health

Youth in need of specialized mental health services continue to be inappropriately placed through the courts and the Department in secure detention environments where their conditions often worsen. The Maryland juvenile justice system cannot become a default component of the Maryland state mental health system. State government and its various departments need to comprehensively address the current severe shortages of in-patient psychiatric resources and comprehensive community-based mental health services.

Mental health professionals at BCJCC are based in a part of the building away from the detention component and routinely respond after an incident has already occurred or upon receiving a call from direct care staff, rather than consistently maintaining a presence among youth in residential units, at the school, and elsewhere around the facility to ensure ongoing processing with detained young people facing challenges.

Youth Detained at BCJJC Awaiting Movement To a Treatment Program

At time of writing, plans are being realized to offer orientation and generalized treatment programming to those youth at BCJJC who are scheduled for admission to a committed placement facility. This is a signally positive development for young people incarcerated at BCJJC who otherwise experience “dead time” while awaiting admission to the committed placement facility where they will be going.

Recreation and Activities for Youth

During the second quarter, case managers and recreation staff at BCJJC coordinated in arranging intermural events and team games to augment regular daily large muscle exercise for youth. More activities need to be added to ensure all the young people at BCJJC are constructively occupied during weekends.

There were special activities organized for youth and their families to celebrate Mother’s Day. Another event for youth included the appearance of a motivational speaker from the Floyd Mayweather, Jr., Foundation.

Education

Starting in mid-2022, an independent Juvenile Services Education Program (JSEP) Board focused solely on education in DJS facilities took over responsibility for education services inside DJS facilities with implementation and resource assistance from the Department.

Staff from the education department at BCJJC successfully organized a series of well-attended and productive events for students during the reporting period, including a career day and job fair featuring representatives from area employers and colleges, and a public art show of creative work produced by young people at BCJJC.

Several students at BCJJC and at other DJS-operated detention and placement facilities were able to take and pass the driving learner’s permit test during the reporting period.

Cheltenham Youth Detention Center

Cheltenham Youth Detention Center (Cheltenham/CYDC), located in Prince George's County, is a hardware secure (locked and fenced) detention center owned and operated by the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department). The DJS-rated housing capacity is 72 young people. Black youth represented 72% and Hispanic/Latino youth represented 18% of the total number of young people entering CYDC during the second quarter of 2023.

| CYDC– Selected Incident Categories | Q2 2021 | Q2 2022 | Q2 2023 |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Average Daily Population (ADP) | 28 | 34 | 64 |
| 1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight | 13 | 15 | 64 |
| 2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault | 1 | 5 | 19 |
| 3. Physical Restraint | 29 | 38 | 86 |
| 4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles | 0 | 4 | 6 |
| 5. Seclusion | 5 | 15 | 29 |
| 6. Contraband | 1 | 2 | 8 |
| 7. Suicide Ideation | 2 | 4 | 10 |
| 8. Suicide Attempt | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 9. Self-Injurious Behavior | 4 | 20 | 5 |

The average daily population at CYDC increased by 88% when comparing the second quarter of 2023 with the same period last year. Comparing the same two periods, fights among youth and staff use of physical restraints at the facility also substantially increased.

Incarceration puts children at risk for physical harm, and managing group dynamics inside facilities continues to be a challenge as some young people bring community-based conflict with

other youth with them when they enter detention facilities. Group and individual fights and assaults can issue from these situations and result in serious injury to youth (Incident 174548). Such dynamics among youth must be carefully considered and proactively addressed.

Changes in Leadership and Progress at Cheltenham

A seasoned DJS professional with experience in both the facility and headquarters level was appointed acting superintendent at the beginning of the second quarter of 2023 and has made significant strides in improving safety, security, staff training and accountability, and youth programming at Cheltenham. The acting superintendent's leadership at Cheltenham has resulted in the implementation of the following positive changes and initiatives:

- ❖ Frequent and consistent use of the large track and field behind the facility for outdoor recreation activities (e.g., bike riding, flag football, and water play) and special events. Although the current Cheltenham facility opened in 2016, this space was rarely utilized for youth prior to the arrival of the incoming acting administration;
- ❖ Partnerships with education staff to provide students with STEM education opportunities, career fairs, and enrichment learning projects such as the creation of a community garden;
- ❖ Organization of varied outlets and events to engage young people including a poetry contest, talent show, guest speakers, and community mentors;
- ❖ Incentive programs such as unit versus unit sports tournaments and a unit of the week competition;
- ❖ Gender-responsive programming such as a cosmetology program, staff training in running girls circle support groups⁷, and writing and journaling lessons from a published author;
- ❖ Enhanced training and mentorship for new staff;
- ❖ Increased scrutiny of incidents to promote staff accountability and greater adherence to safety and security policies and protocols; and

⁷ For more information about the girls circle program, see https://onecirclefoundation.org/girls-circle?gad=1&qclid=EAlaIqobChMI9JjWyMO5gAMViK3ICh1rcwgyEAAYASAAEgKKzfD_BwE

- ❖ Concerted efforts to improve the culture at Cheltenham – efforts that have contributed to a sizeable reduction in incidents at time of writing (early August of 2023) – please refer to the incident data from June and July of 2023 contained in the following chart which indicates a significant diminution in incidents involving aggression at the Cheltenham facility.

| CYDC– Selected Incident Categories | June 2023 | July 2023 |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Average Daily Population (ADP) | 68 | 64 |
| 1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight | 20 | 11 |
| 2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault | 11 | 0 |
| 3. Physical Restraint | 31 | 12 |
| 4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles | 1 | 2 |
| 5. Seclusion | 10 | 1 |

The evident advances in safety at Cheltenham - reflected in the data from the table above - have been accomplished in tandem with and are closely related to the significant improvements in conditions for youth and staff at CYDC.

However, the projected tenure of the acting superintendent has come to an end as a permanently appointed superintendent has begun working at Cheltenham at time of writing (early August). It is vital that the successful strategies employed by the acting superintendent are continued so that conditions for young people living at CYDC and for staff working there continue to improve.

Cheltenham has been subject to frequent leadership changes in recent times - five superintendents in less than five years. The incoming superintendent is new to the Department but has held leadership positions in juvenile justice facilities in other jurisdictions. Departmental leadership should strongly consider an extended transition and on-boarding process so that the departing acting superintendent can work closely with the newly installed superintendent to help

ensure stability and the extension and expansion of the recently implemented effective and valuable facility-based reforms.

Staffing availability-related issues persist at Cheltenham due to call outs and (especially) the significant number of staff on leave for medical and other reasons, and it remains an ongoing struggle to muster a robust enough staff-to-youth ratio to enable consistent and comprehensive programming for young people at the facility. Additionally, among the three larger DJS detention facilities (BCJJC, Hickey and Cheltenham), Cheltenham has the smallest number of assigned dedicated staff positions; the Department should assign more staff positions at Cheltenham as part of continuing efforts to help ease staffing pressures at the facility.

Girls and Young Women Detained at Cheltenham

Detained girls, many of whom have extensive mental health and trauma-related needs, are still relegated to a single living unit at the facility and are frequently split up in two groups within the unit – with each splinter group having to take turns going to school and recreation – in an attempt to manage the boredom, frustration and tensions that inevitably arise from the girls being forced to live in such close quarters for extended periods of time.

Infirmary stays are off-limits to girls and young women at CYDC, a facility designed for and, until the closure of the Noyes facility last year, exclusively housing boys and young men. In addition, and also in contrast with the boys at Cheltenham, girls do not have access to a separate pending placement living area which allows adjudicated youth awaiting an opening in a placement facility to be housed together and to begin treatment orientation and to complete some of the generalized aspects of treatment planning.

The Department should prioritize the needs of girls in their custody. When girls and young women in the custody of the Department had their own dedicated facilities, they received more individualized care and services and had more dedicated space to meet their needs. The results flowing from this were reflected in positive behavioral and academic outcomes.

Charles H. Hickey, Jr., School

The Charles H. Hickey, Jr., School (Hickey) in Baltimore County is a hardware secure (locked and fenced) detention center for boys. Hickey is owned and operated by the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) and has a DJS-rated housing capacity of 72 youth. Black youth represented 81% and Hispanic/Latino youth represented 7% of the total number of young people entering the Hickey facility during the second quarter of 2023.

| Hickey – Selected Incident Categories | Q2 2021 | Q2 2022 | Q2 2023 |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Average Daily Population (ADP) | 41 | 44 | 57 |
| 1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight | 27 | 32 | 45 |
| 2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault | 2 | 6 | 0 |
| 3. Physical Restraint | 19 | 45 | 60 |
| 4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles | 1 | 12 | 13 |
| 5. Seclusion | 3 | 13 | 20 |
| 6. Contraband | 3 | 1 | 8 |
| 7. Suicide Ideation | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 8. Suicide Attempt | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9. Self-Injurious Behavior | 4 | 0 | 0 |

The average daily population of youth in Hickey increased by 29% when comparing the second quarter of 2023 with the same time in 2022.

Continuing the comparison between the second quarter of 2023 with the same time last year:

- Incidents involving youth on youth fights and assaults increased.
- The number of instances when physical restraints and seclusion were utilized also rose.

Youth With Complex Medical Needs

Detention centers are not designed to meet the needs of children with significant medical issues, however Hickey and the Department managed to ensure the provision of medical and therapeutic services for three medically vulnerable youth during the second quarter.

Recreation and Activities

The Hickey administration and staff continue to make special efforts to create and offer youth meaningful activities and outlets for positive engagement. Recreational activities would be further enhanced by bringing back a popular but temporarily halted staff-organized weekend basketball camp for youth. Ongoing recreational programming is augmented by other activities including game and movie nights. Youth also have regular access to a music room and special events are arranged – a travelling choir from Tennessee visited with youth during the second quarter. There is also a popular therapy dog at Hickey, however, youth do not have regularized access to the dog.

Contact With Loved Ones

The young people at Hickey are now receiving an allowance of five phone calls per week and have opportunities to earn additional calls.

Youth with children of their own need to have more frequent in-person and virtual access to their families without having to navigate cumbersome or time-consuming request processes.

During the second quarter, youth and their families took part in well-organized Mother's and Father's Day events, which included extended day visits, special food, family photograph opportunities and a "paint and sip" session.

Education

The school at Hickey and inside all DJS-operated detention and committed placement centers is staffed and supervised by the Juvenile Services Education Program (JSEP) superintendent. Education services are overseen by the superintendent and an independent school board with administrative coordination and assistance provided by DJS. Several youth

earned high school diplomas at Hickey during the second quarter. There were a number of teacher and school office administration vacancies at Hickey during the reporting period.

Shelter Care

There is a shelter care program for boys and girls on the grounds outside the fence of the Hickey hardware secure (maximum security) detention component. The program started in 2022 and is overseen by DJS administrators from the Hickey detention center.

Direct-care staff from Hickey supervise the youth in shelter care, and the staff are diligently working to care for the youth at the shelter.

While youth in shelter care have some access to case management and mental health services, these resources need to be broadened and deepened. Youth are now allowed to wear their own instead of state-issued clothes.

Youth and staff at the shelter should also have dedicated cooking/kitchen resources and should not be dependent upon delivery of meals from the adjacent detention center.

Shelter residents have limited offsite and onsite activities, and more in-house pastimes and access to local community events need to be provided to help youth in shelter care stay constructively occupied.

The phone call allowance for youth at the shelter is the same as that for detained youth at Hickey – there should be open phone access at the shelter.

Thomas J.S. Waxter Children's Center

The Thomas J.S. Waxter Children's Center (Waxter) in Laurel (Anne Arundel County) was a hardware secure (locked and fenced) detention center for girls. Waxter was operated by the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) and had a DJS-rated housing capacity of 32 girls.

The Waxter facility was aged, cramped and in disrepair and so the Department refurbished the Noyes secure detention center in Montgomery County to serve as an all-girls detention facility. Noyes was also an old facility, but the physical plant was in slightly better condition in some respects than the wholly decrepit Waxter center. Waxter was closed and the girls housed there were transferred to the Noyes facility in March of 2022.

In April of 2022, an air conditioner handler unit caught fire at the Noyes facility and the girls were relocated to a unit at the DJS detention center for boys located in Cheltenham, Prince George's County (the Cheltenham Youth Detention Center/CYDC), until repairs could be made to the Noyes AC unit. In June of 2022, the girls were transported back to the Noyes facility in Rockville.

In mid-October of 2022, the Noyes facility for girls was closed again and detained girls awaiting adjudication and multiple staff from Noyes were again transferred to the detention center for boys in Cheltenham (CYDC), this time as part of a belated measure to bolster critically low staffing levels at the Cheltenham facility.

At time of writing (July of 2023), detained girls (except those from the eastern shore region) remain all together in one 12-cell residential unit at Cheltenham.

Instead of a makeshift approach to the housing of detained girls and young women that results in sending them to inappropriate settings, the Department needs to prioritize the needs of the girls and young women entrusted to its care.

Alfred D. Noyes Children's Center

The Alfred D. Noyes Children's Center (Noyes), located in Montgomery County, is a Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) owned and operated maximum security detention center for girls with a DJS-rated population capacity of 29. Noyes was temporarily closed in early December 2021 and boys and girls housed at Noyes were moved to other DJS detention centers while the Department arranged the conversion of Noyes to an all-girls detention center. After the conversion, girls housed at the aged and deteriorating Waxter detention center in Laurel were moved to Noyes in March of 2022. Due to both facility conditions and staffing issues, detained girls were displaced from Noyes several times during 2022. At time of writing (July of 2023), Noyes remains closed and most of the securely detained girls in the state are being held in the single 12-cell unit at Cheltenham.

Girls in the juvenile justice system have different medical, reproductive health, mental health, and trauma-related needs than boys. If the state continues to incarcerate girls⁸, they deserve adequate space and services as well and a setting tailored to meet their needs and circumstances. Relegating detained young women to a single unit in a secure detention facility set up to serve young men indicates a lack of appropriate planning and dedication of resources and arguably demonstrates a casual disregard for the well-being of girls in DJS custody.

The back and forth that detained girls endured during 2022 was essentially due to the Department's years-long failure to permanently address longstanding physical plant problems at facilities used to house girls and young women. The transfer - in the fall of 2022 - of detained girls from Noyes to Cheltenham (where they remain at time of writing) was necessitated by the Department's failure to address obvious staffing-related issues at the Cheltenham facility until the situation reached a crisis point. New leadership at DJS commissioned a study of staffing issues during the current reporting period and is currently actively attempting to address the issue.

Departmental leadership have expressed concern about the paucity of resources available to the girls and young women held in secure detention on a single unit at the Cheltenham detention center for boys. Leadership has also expressed concern about the girls and young women housed on a single unit at the Victor Cullen committed placement facility for boys in western Maryland.

⁸ Some states and jurisdictions have committed to ending the incarceration of girls by devoting resources to community-based interventions, supports, and programs that can better serve the needs of young people. See Dholakia, Nazish and Rosenthal, Lindsay (October 4, 2022), "Hawai'i is so Close to Ending the Incarceration of Young Girls, Vera Institute of Justice, available at: <https://www.vera.org/ending-mass-incarceration/reducing-incarceration/reducing-jail-and-prison-population/ending-girls-incarceration-initiative#:~:text=Vera's%20Initiative%20to%20End%20Girls,juvenile%20legal%20system%20by%202030>. See also the Vera's Initiative to End Girls' Incarceration, available at: <https://www.vera.org/ending-mass-incarceration/reducing-incarceration/reducing-jail-and-prison-population/ending-girls-incarceration-initiative#:~:text=Vera's%20Initiative%20to%20End%20Girls,juvenile%20legal%20system%20by%202030>.

Lower Eastern Shore Children’s Center

The Lower Eastern Shore Children’s Center (LESCC) is a hardware secure detention center located in Salisbury, Maryland. LESCC is owned and operated by the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) and has a DJS-rated housing capacity of 24 youth. Black youth represented 73% and Hispanic/Latino youth represented 7% of the total number of young people entering LESCC during the second quarter of 2023.

| LESCC – Selected Incident Categories | Q2 2021 | Q2 2022 | Q2 2023 |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Average Daily Population (ADP) | 15 | 17 | 19 |
| 1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight | 10 | 10 | 14 |
| 2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| 3. Physical Restraint | 11 | 31 | 27 |
| 4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 5. Seclusion | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| 6. Contraband | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| 7. Suicide Ideation | 0 | 11 | 1 |
| 8. Suicide Attempt | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9. Self-Injurious Behavior | 0 | 1 | 0 |

The average daily youth population at LESCC increased slightly when comparing the second quarter of 2023 with the same time last year. The number of incidents involving aggression remained relatively low at the facility during the reporting period and youth interviewed remarked that they received individualized attention from staff and felt safe at LESCC and several added that the food at LESCC is well prepared and tasty.

Although there is a need to hire a recreation specialist, onsite activities available to the young people at LESCC expanded during the reporting period as a result of ongoing efforts by staff and administrators and there is a positive dynamic at the facility. Staff at LESCC are also networking with local community groups and volunteer organizations with a view towards bringing more programming opportunities for youth. These initiatives should be continued and expanded and should include more weekend activities for youth.

There is a need for regular hair care services at LESCC for both the young women and the young men at the facility.

Western Maryland Children’s Center

Western Maryland Children’s Center (WMCC), located in Washington County, is a 24-bed maximum security detention center for boys owned and operated by the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department). Black youth represented 66% and Hispanic/Latino youth represented 5% of the total number of young people entering WMCC during the second quarter of 2023.

| WMCC – Selected Incident Categories | Q2 2021 | Q2 2022 | Q2 2023 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Average Daily Population (ADP) | 12 | 16 | 15 |
| 1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight | 5 | 8 | 20 |
| 2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| 3. Physical Restraint | 13 | 54 | 37 |
| 4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles | 4 | 12 | 8 |
| 5. Seclusion | 0 | 13 | 4 |
| 6. Contraband | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 7. Suicide Ideation | 4 | 4 | 2 |
| 8. Suicide Attempt | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9. Self-Injurious Behavior | 0 | 0 | 1 |

The average daily population at WMCC decreased slightly when comparing the second quarter of 2023 with the same time last year. The number of incidents involving youths fighting increased while utilization of restraint and seclusion decreased significantly.

Operations at WMCC operations are functional and administrators are responsive to youth and staff needs. The boys and young men incarcerated in the facility report feeling supported and safe. However, staff availability for shift work is a pressing and ongoing issue at WMCC, just as it is in most DJS-operated facilities. At times during the reporting period, the

young people at the facility were required to stay on their living units for meals rather be escorted to the cafeteria, as there were not enough available male staff available to perform required pat down searches of youth before movement.

The young people at WMCC have requested more contact with therapists and mental health professionals at the facility should intensify contact and processing with all youth and should ensure youth with high needs are receiving enough attention.

Youth have also asked to see the facility therapy dog more frequently and on their living units and have requested more programming and opportunities for constructive activities in general, especially on weekends (when there is a lot of downtime). Staff and supervisors at WMCC have increased programming and these efforts to add more activities for youth should continue and be expanded.

The Department has arranged for some cable television availability at WMCC and other DJS-operated facilities, however technical issues have stymied installations at WMCC and at some other DJS sites. The issues should be resolved as soon as possible.

COMMITTED PLACEMENT CENTERS

Victor Cullen Center

The Victor Cullen Center (Cullen), in Frederick County, is a hardware secure (locked and fenced) committed placement center owned and operated by the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department). The DJS-rated housing capacity is 26 youth. Black youth represented 77% and Hispanic/Latino youth represented 5% of the total number of young people entering the Cullen facility during the second quarter of 2023.

| Victor Cullen – Selected Incident Categories | Q2 2021 | Q2 2022 | Q2 2023 |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Average Daily Population (ADP) | 14 | 13 | 24 |
| 1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight | 3 | 3 | 16 |
| 2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault | 2 | 3 | 7 |
| 3. Physical Restraint | 16 | 2 | 28 |
| 4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles | 11 | 1 | 9 |
| 5. Seclusion | 4 | 0 | 6 |
| 6. Contraband | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| 7. Suicide Ideation | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| 8. Suicide Attempt | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9. Self-Injurious Behavior | 0 | 0 | 2 |

The average daily population at Cullen increased by 84% when comparing the second quarter of this year with the same time in 2022. Further comparison of the same two time periods shows that the number of youth fights substantially increased as did seclusions and staff usage of physical and mechanical restraints on youth.

Staffing and Services Issues

The Victor Cullen Center is suffering from available staffing issues which results in a lack of consistency in the delivery of therapeutic, educational and recreational programming for the boys and girls incarcerated there.

There have been ongoing difficulties in recruiting and retaining mental health professionals to work at the remotely located Cullen facility.

Recreational staff are frequently pulled into direct care rotation due to shortages and recreational scheduling and activities for youth are curtailed as a result.

At times during the second quarter, youth education services were provided on residential units because not enough direct care staff were available to supervise movement to the school.

There were also problems with some of the most basic of services, for example, meal quality and presentation were poor and barbering services were not available for weeks at a time.

There have been several instances where youth close to completing the program at Cullen have been ejected and sent back to a detention center – staff at Cullen should work closely with youth nearing completion and make every effort to shepherd them through what can be an anxiety provoking process.

At time of writing (early August of 2023), leadership changes are taking place at the facility.

Miscellaneous Activities

Youth at Cullen completed an aquaculture project during the reporting period, releasing trout into a local pond.

Education

The Juvenile Services Education Program (JSEP) is responsible for education services at all DJS secure detention and committed placement facilities, including the Victor Cullen Center.

During the second quarter, a young woman graduated with a high school diploma. In addition to continuing to help students to prepare for graduation from high school, every student who may be interested in college classes or GED preparation should be encouraged, informed and assisted to achieve their goals by the school staff and administrator.

During the reporting period, a student at Victor Cullen was enrolled in online community college courses but was not provided with consistent access to a computer which he needed to complete the courses. He was not able to overcome the lack of support and resources and had to withdraw from his academic pursuits.

Students report fractured relationships with teachers in the school and voice a need for more hands-on instruction and help with schoolwork. A beloved guidance counselor who had positive relationships with students and assisted several students who achieved their GED, resigned during the second quarter of 2023. The Cullen school administration needs to ensure instructional expectations are met by all teachers during class time and also needs to make sure students have what they need in order to pursue academic goals.

Juvenile Services Education Program administrators are on-site at Cullen to address issues with school climate and education services. At time of writing (early August of 2023), teachers are focusing on improving classroom instruction and student engagement.

Victor Cullen Center Program for Girls and Young Women

Overview

There were improvements to the program for girls and young women at Victor Cullen during the second quarter of 2023. Superintendent and assistant superintendent positions were created and filled to oversee operation of the program, and plans are in place to provide these leaders with their own direct-care staff to work with the girls. Ensuring that there is a dedicated group of staff will help foster consistency and afford the girls the opportunity to develop better rapport and deeper relationships with permanently assigned staff and help to cultivate positive growth and development.

During the second quarter, opportunities to take part in off-grounds activities increased slightly - two of the girls placed at Cullen attended enrichment and recreation activities off-campus. The DJS administration is supportive of exploring additional venues for off-grounds opportunities for the girls and young women placed at Cullen.

Program Needs

Despite these positive developments, the program is still lacking an appropriate level of in-house mental health resources and expertise, as well as needing substantially more recreational, enrichment and educational supports to help the girls and young women at Cullen, which represents the deep end of the Maryland juvenile justice system.

There is no full-time, on-site mental health clinician assigned to the program for girls and therapeutic services are primarily provided by a contracted therapist who comes to the facility once or twice each week to conduct group and individual sessions. The lack of strong clinical

leadership inside the facility and the resulting absence of an overarching therapeutic milieu leaves direct care staff ill-equipped to manage group dynamics and address the individual needs of incarcerated the girls and young women at Cullen who have extensive mental health and trauma histories.

There was a minimum of two and a maximum of five girls at Cullen at any given time during the second quarter of 2023. Out of a total of eight girls who were at Cullen at some point during the reporting period, two girls were ejected from the program. One of the two girls concerned was returned to a secure detention center and was subsequently released home with wrap-around community services.

The other girl who was ejected had a history of suicidal ideation; relational problems with other girls and some staff; poor family support; and abandonment issues. Mental health clinicians at Cullen reported that the girl had persistent thoughts that her life was worthless and that she felt that she shouldn't be alive. The girl told mental health staff that she thought nobody loved her and that she had nowhere to go after release from Victor Cullen (Incidents 174650 and 175591).

Cullen, which is ostensibly a treatment program, could not address the girl's behavioral and mental health needs and after three months (and notwithstanding her verbalized fears and thoughts of being unwanted), she was ejected from the program and sent to linger in a secure detention center for over a month in order to "stabilize her" (according to DJS personnel), and to allow time for the Department to perform further evaluations to guide future decisions about her care.

The decision to send the girl into a secure detention environment was made with an assumption that putting her in such a predicament would result in her receiving more structure, therapeutic support and services. Such an approach indicates a failure of the program for girls at Cullen to offer appropriate or even adequate rehabilitative services for girls in the deep end of the juvenile justice system.

At time of writing (early August of 2023), the girl was being transported from detention back to Cullen with a view toward completing the program.

In addition to inadequate mental health services, girls at Cullen during the reporting period did not consistently have the structured recreational and enrichment activities that are supposed to be available to them on a daily basis. The girls frequently voiced boredom and a need for more activities to keep them constructively occupied.

A recent change in the recreation schedule means that a Cullen recreation specialist will be available to work with the girls and this development may help alleviate some of the boredom and lack of structure issues. Facility leadership is also working on expanding activities for the girls.

Recommendations Regarding Short- and Long-Term Treatment for Girls in the Deep End of the Maryland Juvenile Justice System

Administrators at the program for girls and young women at the Victor Cullen Center need to continue efforts to improve conditions for girls at the facility. Particular areas of focus should include:

- ✓ Shifting away from an institutional and correctional approach and towards the cultivation of a more home-like environment with ample opportunity for recreational and community engagement both on and off-site.
- ✓ Creating a supportive and well-resourced school environment focused on providing in-person instruction and one-on-one support to promote academic achievement.
- ✓ Assigning experienced, culturally responsive, and competent fulltime mental health professionals to the program in order to: deliver appropriate levels of individual and group therapeutic sessions for youth; provide ongoing staff training; help guide staff interactions with youth; and assist with the creation a therapeutic milieu throughout the facility.
- ✓ Providing more opportunities for family engagement including offering weekly transportation assistance to families who live far away so that they can maintain regular contact with their children who are incarcerated in Cullen. Family engagement is especially difficult at the Victor Cullen Center due to its remote location, and the Department should compensate for this hardship by increasing opportunities for youth to be in contact with loved ones from their communities.

In the long-term, the small number of girls in the deep-end of the juvenile justice system would be better served if their local communities were provided with resources and assistance to increase capacity in order to provide holistic, evidence-based and culturally and developmentally appropriate services to children and their families.

The harms and ineffectiveness of the correctional approach and of incarceration in dealing with the root causes of problematic youth behavior are well documented.⁹ In contrast,

⁹ Campaign for Youth Justice, "If Not the Adult System, Then Where? Alternatives to Adult Incarceration for Youth Certified Adults", page 11, available at: https://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/images/ALT_INCARCERATION_FINAL.pdf

community-based interventions have been shown to work well for the “vast majority”¹⁰ of adjudicated youth in part because these programs “serve youth in their communities with stakeholders who come from those communities, adopt a positive youth development frame, and prioritize participation from family members.”¹¹ Given the proven success of community interventions, some child advocates have recommended that juvenile justice stakeholders “should take any cost savings from divestments in deep-end care, and permanently re-allocate them to communities to focus on healing, rebuilding community infrastructure, and age-appropriate services. This is particularly urgent for youth arrested in high poverty, over-policed, under-resourced communities, where often many children of color in the justice system live.”¹²

The Department should continue to work to build capacity in local communities so that they can provide services to families and children with the eventual goal of ending the incarceration of girls in Maryland.¹³

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ See Vera’s Ending Girls Incarceration Initiative, available at: <https://www.vera.org/ending-mass-incarceration/reducing-incarceration/reducing-jail-and-prison-population/ending-girls-incarceration-initiative>

Garrett Children’s Center (formerly Savage Mountain Youth Center)

The Garrett Children’s Center (GCC/Garrett) is a Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) owned and operated hardware secure (locked and fenced) committed placement center for boys with a DJS-rated capacity of 24. The facility is in rural Garrett County in western Maryland.

There were no youth placed at GCC during the reporting period, however, education staff report to the facility and broadcast virtual classes to various other DJS facilities to mitigate teacher shortages. Security staff and some administrators also report to the facility. Vacancies for superintendent and assistant superintendent positions at GCC were filled toward the end of 2022. At time of writing (July of 2023), the superintendent and assistant superintendent from the Garrett facility are assigned to the Victor Cullen Center to bolster staffing of the girl’s program at Victor Cullen.

The state of Maryland spent close to \$6 million dollars to add fencing, locks, and other security apparatus to convert the remotely located staff secure Savage Mountain Youth Center into a more prison-like hardware secure facility and renamed it Garrett Children’s Center. Garrett Children’s Center was fully operational for two years (from December of 2018 to December of 2020) before it closed to youth in 2021, following a COVID-19 outbreak at the facility.

The significant fiscal and human resources spent on keeping the facility open could be more effectively spent on further increasing the availability of community-based programming for young people. As researchers on juvenile justice issues have recognized, “youth incarceration has several negative outcomes, including association with more delinquent peers and increased criminal behavior and recidivism. Closing underutilized juvenile correctional facilities and reinvesting the savings into evidence-based programs and services keeps young people out of the system, in school, and connected to their families.”¹⁴

DJS should not reopen Garrett Children’s Center as a residential placement for youth as continuing to invest in remote congregate care facilities constitutes a flawed approach to youth justice and experts in the field have concluded that “consistently brutal conditions, stark racial disparities, dismal outcomes, and high costs have characterized youth prisons since their birth.”¹⁵

¹⁴ Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), OJJDP Priorities, available at [OJJDP Priorities | Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention \(ojp.gov\)](https://www.ojjdp.gov/priorities)

¹⁵ Schiraldi, Vincent (June 2020), Can We Eliminate the Youth Prison? And What Should We Replace it With?, Executive Session of the Future of Justice Policy, The Square One Project, available at [Can We Eliminate the Youth Prison? \(And What Should We Replace It With\)? | By Vincent Schiraldi \(June 2020\) - Square One Project \(squareonejustice.org\)](https://squareonejustice.org/)

Youth Centers x2

The youth centers, located in remote western Maryland, consist of two separate staff secure (not fenced and locked) facilities for boys. Both centers are owned and operated by the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department). The facilities are Green Ridge (30-youth capacity) and Backbone Mountain (28-youth capacity). Black youth represented 80% and Hispanic/Latino youth represented 9% of the total number of young people entering the two centers during the second quarter of 2023.

| Combined Youth Centers (x2) – Selected Incident Categories | Q2 2021 | Q2 2022 | Q2 2023 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Average Daily Population (ADP) | 25 | 34 | 53 |
| 1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight | 7 | 20 | 21 |
| 2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault | 4 | 3 | 8 |
| 3. Physical Restraint | 57 | 45 | 123 |
| 4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles | 15 | 1 | 28 |
| 5. Seclusion | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 6. Contraband | 3 | 3 | 5 |
| 7. Suicide Ideation | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| 8. Suicide Attempt | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 9. Self-Injurious Behavior | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The number of young people being sent to DJS-operated committed placement centers including the two youth centers is steadily increasing (as indicated by the data in the table above) and this development represents a concerning trend toward higher incarceration rates across the Maryland juvenile justice system. There is a concurrent alarming upward trend in disproportionate representation of youth of color in both detention centers and committed placement facilities, which represent the deepest (carceral) end of our state’s juvenile justice system. At the two youth centers, Black and Latino/Hispanic youth together represented 89% of total youth entries during the second quarter of 2023.

As is also evident from the data the table above, there was a large increase in staff use of physical and mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) on young people at the youth centers during the second quarter, in comparison to the same time last year.

A substantial majority of incidents involving the physical restraints took place at the Green Ridge Youth Center - 87 instances versus 36 at the Backbone Mountain facility. A similar pattern held for the usage of mechanical restraints on youth – 17 instances at Green Ridge versus 11 at Backbone. In regard to reports involving suicide ideation, there were five at the Green Ridge facility and none at Backbone Mountain.

The young people incarcerated at Green Ridge report that both direct care and school staff need training in building rapport and consistency with youth instead of engaging in power struggles with youth and constantly threatening to take behavior management program points away for minor things. Youth maintain that such staff behavior actually triggers them and escalates minor situations into stand offs and incidents involving physical restraints. One youth offered a school-based example and stated that teachers take away points when students put their heads down on their desks after finishing class assignments. Both youth centers should have a behavioral health professional assigned to the school area to process with youth who are struggling or in crisis during the school day and to help stabilize youth so that they can return to the classroom.

BASIC SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

Youth consistently complain about the food provided at the Backbone Mountain Youth Center and this is a longstanding and substantially unaddressed issue.

Although off-grounds activities are increasing, excessive downtime continues to be an issue inside the facility. There are two recreation specialists at Backbone and yet the young people incarcerated there need more to do, especially on weekends.

Youth who have already gained a high school diploma also need more organized activities available to them throughout the week as well as on weekends, when they are frequently left to sleep, watch TV and play cards during the day. A recently instituted work program for high school graduates will alleviate some of the downtime for the youth who are able to partake in the program. Some high school graduate students at Backbone also take community college courses during the Garrett College academic year – youth participants said they found a welding course to be particularly useful and enjoyable.

Backbone facility administration needs to ensure that all youth have access to daily recreation opportunities - even if some youth refuse - as sometimes a refusal to partake on the part of one youth results in no one having a chance to take part in recreational activities. All youth are entitled to a minimum of one hours' worth of large muscle exercise every day.

Youth at the Green Ridge Youth Center also endure excessive downtime inside the facility, unlike the Backbone Mountain facility, Green Ridge does not have a recreation specialist.

Silver Oak Academy

Silver Oak Academy (SOA/Silver Oak), located in Carroll County, is a privately-operated staff secure (not locked and fenced) committed placement center licensed by the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) to house up to 96 boys.

Due to concerns about staff supervision issues, youth safety, and problems within the education department at Silver Oak, all residential youth placed through DJS were removed from the program in May of 2022 and new admissions to the program through DJS have been indefinitely halted.

SMALLER FACILITY UPDATES

SMALLER FACILITY UPDATES

Morning Star Youth Academy

Morning Star Youth Academy (Morning Star) is a staff secure (not locked or fenced) committed placement center on Maryland's eastern shore. The facility is operated by VisionQuest, Inc., and is licensed by DJS to house up to 24 youth.

Morning Star utilizes a trauma-informed approach called the Sanctuary model. Therapeutic and treatment services at the facility are provided onsite and supplemented by clinicians from community mental health organizations.

There was a positive youth-to-youth and staff-to-youth dynamic at the facility during the reporting period. Off-campus outings increased during the second quarter of 2023 and included field trips in addition to volunteer and recreational opportunities.

Youth at Morning Star participate in on- and off-site recreational activities including biking, swimming, yoga and mindfulness, and musical instrument instruction. There is an outdoor pool on the campus which is open during summer months and an equine therapy program which primarily involves taking care of horses on campus and several youth are interested in and involved with this work. There is a popular music program on site for youth, however the staffer who runs the program is leaving the facility; hopefully the program can continue under new guidance.

Young people at Morning Star volunteer in surrounding local communities and partake in various activities, including helping children with their schoolwork and packing meals for a local charitable organization. Some youth from Morning Star also work at local businesses.

One Love Group Home

One Love Group Home (One Love) is an 8-bed group home in Baltimore City operated by Building Communities Today for Tomorrow, Inc. The home is licensed by and receives referrals from the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) and began receiving referrals to house youth involved with the Maryland Department of Human Resources during the second quarter of 2022.

One Love partners with community-based organizations to provide therapy, education, employment, and enrichment opportunities for young people while they reside in the home-like environment offered by the small community-based facility. Students from One Love are enrolled in local schools and work toward achieving a high school diploma. Family contact and family involvement in youth progress is encouraged by facility administrators.

Due to the nature of the program, older youth who are interested in and motivated to develop skills for independent living are the best candidates for successful program completion. Young people who need enhanced therapeutic support and intensive services and/or highly structured routines and environments may face difficulties at One Love. The Department should align youth referrals to One Love with the level of care and services available at the home.

Given the community-based location and ease of accessibility to the facility, One Love administrators recently had some security cameras installed in the front and back of the home as well as in interior common areas.

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE SERVICES - RESPONSE



DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE SERVICES RESPONSE TO JJMU 2023 SECOND QUARTER REPORT

DJS appreciates the opportunity to respond to the thoughtful feedback shared by JJMU in this report, particularly around issues that the new administration is committed to addressing, including working with young people with serious mental health issues in our care, prioritizing keeping youth in the community, keeping young people who do end up in our facilities safe while responding to their needs, and focusing on providing targeted services to the girls in our care, among others. As with the prior reports released since this administration took office, DJS shares many of the concerns raised by JJMU. This is true despite the dedication, love, and commitment to constantly improve that DJS and JSEP staff exhibit, even when their work is challenging. More detailed responses to specific issues raised in the JJMU Second Quarter report are provided below.

Mental Health Response

DJS agrees with the JJMU that youth with acute mental health needs should not be in DJS facilities. DJS focuses on providing behavioral health services to youth in the least restrictive environment and in settings that best address youth's behavioral health needs. In many cases this process begins with the use of comprehensive behavioral health assessments which are utilized in combination with other information to identify youth's behavioral health needs and make treatment and placement recommendations. This results in fewer youth being placed in secure facilities, and more youth receiving services in the community with outpatient behavioral health providers, and for youth with very complex mental health needs, residential treatment centers. These assessments are also used to help determine the intensity of services to be provided to youth who are committed to DJS-operated facilities as part of DJS' recently implemented Comprehensive Treatment Model (CTM), which was launched in July 2023.

In the community, DJS provides behavioral health services to youth with community behavioral health providers and its own behavioral health staff. In detention and treatment facilities, services are provided by DJS and contracted behavioral health staff. All youth in detention facilities receive individual supportive counseling and psychoeducational groups, with those who need it

receiving psychiatric services, and those pending placement in DJS-operated facilities receiving more intensive therapy prior to being placed in DJS treatment facilities.

Youth in DJS treatment facilities receive individual therapy, group therapy, family therapy, and psychiatric services, as needed, within a larger therapeutic milieu that is based on Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). DBT is an evidence-based psychological intervention and the overarching treatment model within these facilities. In addition, since launching the CTM, DJS has worked to expand DBT services on pending placement units and as part of time-limited aftercare provided to young people transitioning home. Behavioral health clinicians provide individual DBT and DBT skills groups which teach youth skills to regulate their emotions and improve their interactions and relationships with others. Behavioral health clinicians also provide evidence-based individual treatments such as Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) to youth with trauma symptoms. For youth with substance use issues, DJS provides the Seven Challenges evidence-based program, which is a combination of process groups and journals that focus on decision-making. Since most behavioral health clinicians in the community are not trained in these evidence-based interventions, DJS trains all newly hired behavioral health clinicians for its treatment facilities in these interventions. Youth who are released from DJS-operated facilities also continue in treatment with DJS behavioral health staff in the community or with community behavioral health providers in an effort to ensure their treatment continues as seamlessly as possible.

Behavioral health services within DJS treatment facilities are provided within a broader DBT milieu as part of CTM in which all staff, particularly direct care staff, coach youth in DBT skills as a way to support youth and help them generalize DBT skills. This also helps to promote more positive interactions between youth and staff. A therapeutic environment in DJS treatment facilities as well as DJS detention facilities and community offices is also supported by the training of all DJS staff in Youth Mental Health First Aid and Trauma Informed Care. These trainings increase staff's knowledge of mental health issues and help to facilitate more positive staff-youth interactions. In addition, the Department has partnered with Roca's Rewire Institute to train DJS community supervision teams in Cognitive Behavior Theory (CBT). Roca's REWIRE CBT approach is designed specifically to support front line staff in delivering a research-based behavior change intervention strategy to young people regardless of the setting.¹⁶

Behavioral health staff play a significant role in both detention and treatment facilities in several ways beyond providing therapy. Adjustments have been made to the schedules of behavioral health staff to provide a broader level of coverage. As DJS works to recruit new behavioral health staff, we prioritize finding staff who have the flexibility to accommodate the needs of the youth in its facilities. Behavioral health staff are integrated into the milieu by being available to youth who are experiencing difficulties in the classroom, and they are available in the evenings and on weekends to engage with youth more informally on their units and when they are participating in

¹⁶ REWIRE is a practice that includes specific skills that staff and young people can learn and use to drive behavior change by learning to think, feel and act differently. In early 2022, DJS was awarded a 3 year grant to train and implement Rewire CBT throughout Maryland. Fourteen cohorts have been completed encompassing six regions and roughly 300 community services staff have been trained. Five more cohorts are planned in the upcoming months.

recreation activities. Behavioral health clinicians also provide consultation to direct care staff and administrators on behavioral health issues.

Behavioral health supervisors participate on facility leadership teams and therefore contribute to the management and operations of their facilities as well as the implementation of strategies and practices, where they provide a behavioral health and trauma-informed perspective. Behavioral health management is also involved in the development and implementation of policies and practices such as the CTM.

DJS is committed to prioritizing youth mental health services, including by working to make all of these interventions stronger and more effective. DJS's behavioral health team is routinely audited by the Office of the Inspector General's Quality Assurance unit and has been found to be compliant with departmental policies as they pertain to diagnostic testing. DJS is devoted to working with our partners in and out of the youth justice system to support treatment and health care for youth with serious mental illness in the community, rather than in residential facilities. We also agree with JJMU that youth with serious mental illness are not best served in juvenile justice settings.

Enhanced activities

Under the new administration, DJS is taking steps to increase activities for confined youth, including off-grounds activities for committed treatment programs. Examples of these off-campus activities during this quarter included: Habitat for Humanity volunteering, bowling, fishing, volleyball, cornhole, boulder maze, hiking, school field trips, canoeing and trips to various state parks. Additionally, incentive trips were taken to local restaurants and movie theaters.

The girls at Victor Cullen Center were able to participate in several activities alongside DJS staff and administration including an ice cream making activity and bingo sessions, as well as a brownie baking activity where youth made and compared store bought brownie mix to scratch-made brownies.

Youth in detention facilities were able to participate in enhanced family engagement activities including: water field day, carnival, karaoke, "egg car" competition, and family feud. Other offerings during the quarter included: Juneteenth activities, art therapy, epoxy painting, drivers education, and a multi-session conflict resolution series with Jeff "Backpack" Young.

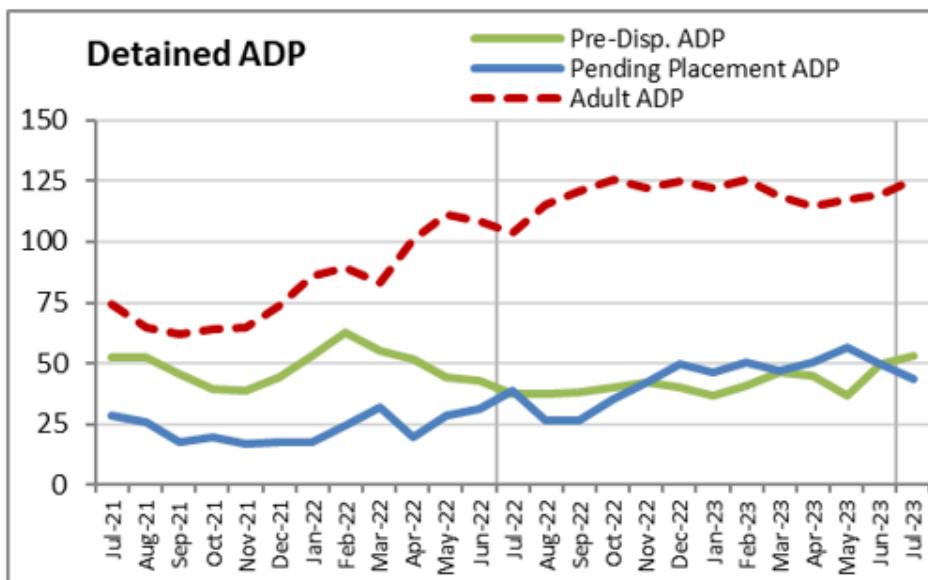
The goal is that over time DJS will continue to improve its enhanced activities, including by expanding use of DBT during off-grounds and other extracurricular type activities with all of our young people. Additionally, one of the new administration's priorities is to reduce idle time, and facility leadership will continue to prioritize offering programming as much as possible.

Innovation teams

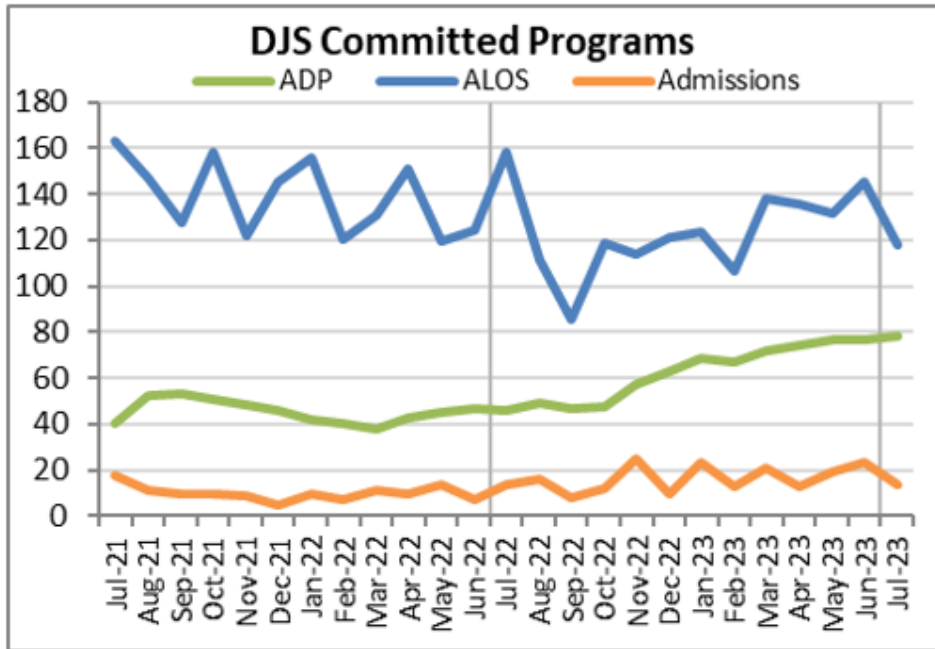
DJS is in the process of assembling Residential Care Innovation Teams to spur on significant reforms in our residential facilities. This will include national and local experts who will work collaboratively with our residential care staff to gradually create model facilities and improve overall facility conditions and culture. We will discuss this directly with JJMU staff and be able to say more about this unit in the next quarterly report.

Population Data

A summary of the population data shows the following:



By examining the last two years of data, it is evident that the rise in the overall detention average daily population (ADP) is being driven by the increase in the adult hold and pending placement ADPs. Between July 2021 and July 2023, ADP for the adult hold population increased 68.0% and ADP for the pending placement population increased 48.3%. During this same time period, ADP for the pre-disposition population also increased overall by 3.8%. It is important to note that since May 2023, pending placement ADP has been decreasing (following a concerted effort by DJS to reduce the pending placement population) while the pre-disposition ADP has increased.



ALOS was at its lowest in September of 2022 and has since increased overall with a noteworthy decrease in the last two months reported. Admissions have also seen an overall increase since September 2022 (which was one of the lowest points in the two year span.) A similar trend can be seen for ADP since September/October 2022 when the rise in ADP became steeper.

Towards this end DJS is focused on a number of broad strategies to reduce the number of youth in any kind of out-of-home placement, including DJS commitment facilities. To-date, DJS reconvened the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) in Baltimore. Additionally, there is a weekly meeting of all regional leadership to review population data and individual cases. In June 2023 DJS launched Pending Placement Units at two of its largest detention centers which provide youth with the opportunity to begin treatment service hours as they await admission to a treatment program. In doing so youth enter the treatment program with a portion of their treatment hours already completed and can move through the program more expeditiously. DJS is working to improve and enhance the newly created Pending Placement Units. Simultaneously the Residential Services team has been participating in review meetings in order to increase support to youth to reduce program removals. Safely and effectively reducing the population of our residential facilities remains a priority for DJS.

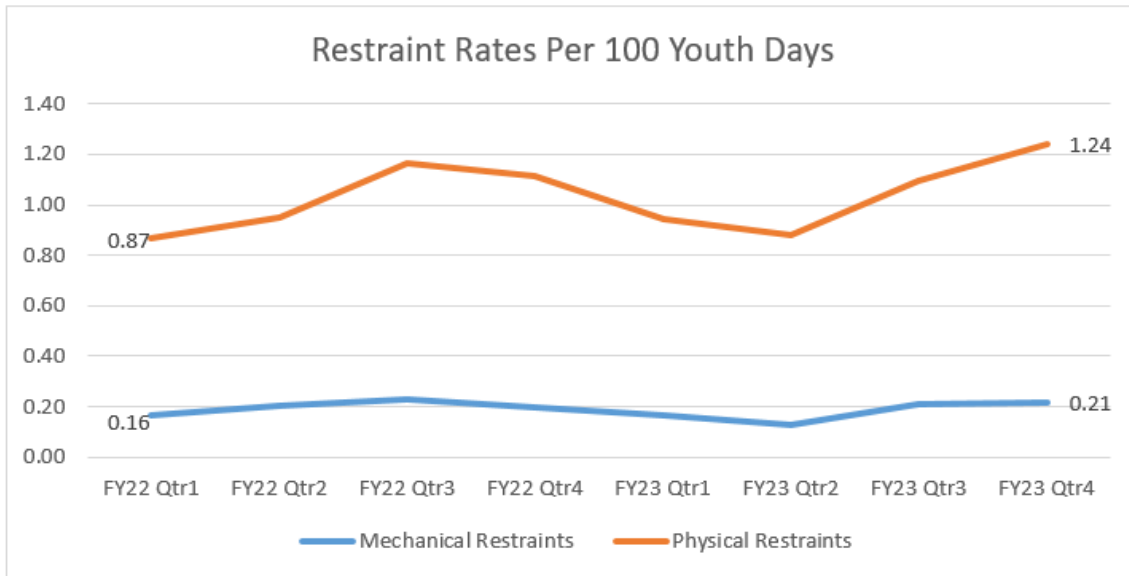
Critical Incidents

In an examination of incident rates, it is important to look over time and also to focus on the two most recent quarters since populations can change dramatically within the span of longer time periods. By examining both, it is possible to see issues that remain despite population changes and also to pinpoint areas of more recent success or concern.

The table below presents the past two quarters of data, showing incident counts and **rates** for detention, committed treatment programs, total state-operated programs, and a breakdown by facility. Discussions of the past two years are added below to present a more complete picture of incidents. Calculating the rate of incidents per 100 youth days is a standard method of measuring a rate of incidents, which allows meaningful comparison between facilities of different populations, and changes to a facility population over time.

| Incident Count/Rate | Mechanical Restraints | | Physical Restraints | | Seclusions | | Youth Fights | | Yth on Yth Assaults | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|
| | FY23Qtr3 | FY23Qtr4 | FY23Qtr3 | FY23Qtr4 | FY23Qtr3 | FY23Qtr4 | FY23Qtr3 | FY23Qtr4 | FY23Qtr3 | FY23Qtr4 |
| Detention | | | | | | | | | | |
| Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Ctr Detention | 13 | 7 | 47 | 53 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 21 | 51 | 53 |
| <i>Rate Per 100 Youth Days</i> | <i>0.07</i> | <i>0.03</i> | <i>0.25</i> | <i>0.26</i> | <i>0.03</i> | <i>0.02</i> | <i>0.03</i> | <i>0.10</i> | <i>0.27</i> | <i>0.26</i> |
| Charles Hickey School | 10 | 13 | 72 | 60 | 14 | 20 | 13 | 7 | 41 | 38 |
| <i>Rate Per 100 Youth Days</i> | <i>0.05</i> | <i>0.06</i> | <i>0.38</i> | <i>0.30</i> | <i>0.07</i> | <i>0.10</i> | <i>0.07</i> | <i>0.03</i> | <i>0.22</i> | <i>0.19</i> |
| Cheltenham Youth Detention Center | 14 | 6 | 68 | 86 | 22 | 29 | 13 | 37 | 38 | 28 |
| <i>Rate Per 100 Youth Days</i> | <i>0.07</i> | <i>0.03</i> | <i>0.36</i> | <i>0.43</i> | <i>0.12</i> | <i>0.14</i> | <i>0.07</i> | <i>0.18</i> | <i>0.20</i> | <i>0.14</i> |
| Lower Eastern Shore Children's Center | 0 | 1 | 26 | 29 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 9 |
| <i>Rate Per 100 Youth Days</i> | <i>0.00</i> | <i>0.00</i> | <i>0.14</i> | <i>0.14</i> | <i>0.01</i> | <i>0.01</i> | <i>0.01</i> | <i>0.02</i> | <i>0.02</i> | <i>0.04</i> |
| Western Maryland Children's Center | 14 | 8 | 31 | 37 | 12 | 4 | 1 | 13 | 3 | 7 |
| <i>Rate Per 100 Youth Days</i> | <i>0.07</i> | <i>0.04</i> | <i>0.16</i> | <i>0.18</i> | <i>0.06</i> | <i>0.02</i> | <i>0.01</i> | <i>0.06</i> | <i>0.02</i> | <i>0.03</i> |
| Total Detention Incident Count | 51 | 36 | 244 | 265 | 54 | 60 | 34 | 83 | 136 | 135 |
| Total Detention Rate Per 100 Youth Days | 0.27 | 0.17 | 1.28 | 1.31 | 0.28 | 0.30 | 0.18 | 0.41 | 0.72 | 0.67 |
| Committed Programs | | | | | | | | | | |
| Backbone Mountain Youth Center | 6 | 11 | 35 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 8 | 3 | 3 |
| <i>Rate Per 100 Youth Days</i> | <i>0.05</i> | <i>0.08</i> | <i>0.27</i> | <i>0.26</i> | <i>0.00</i> | <i>0.00</i> | <i>0.04</i> | <i>0.06</i> | <i>0.02</i> | <i>0.02</i> |
| Green Ridge Youth Center | 7 | 17 | 56 | 87 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 4 |
| <i>Rate Per 100 Youth Days</i> | <i>0.05</i> | <i>0.13</i> | <i>0.43</i> | <i>0.64</i> | <i>0.00</i> | <i>0.00</i> | <i>0.05</i> | <i>0.04</i> | <i>0.05</i> | <i>0.03</i> |
| Victor Cullen Center | 3 | 9 | 18 | 30 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 12 | 5 | 4 |
| <i>Rate Per 100 Youth Days</i> | <i>0.02</i> | <i>0.07</i> | <i>0.14</i> | <i>0.22</i> | <i>0.02</i> | <i>0.03</i> | <i>0.04</i> | <i>0.09</i> | <i>0.04</i> | <i>0.03</i> |
| Total Committed Incident Count | 16 | 37 | 109 | 153 | 2 | 4 | 16 | 26 | 14 | 11 |
| Total Committed Rate Per 100 Youth Days | 0.12 | 0.27 | 0.83 | 1.13 | 0.02 | 0.03 | 0.12 | 0.19 | 0.11 | 0.08 |
| Total State-Operated (Detention & Committed) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total State-Operated Incident Count | 67 | 72 | 353 | 418 | 56 | 64 | 50 | 109 | 150 | 146 |
| State-Operated Rate Per 100 Youth Days | 0.21 | 0.21 | 1.1 | 1.24 | 0.17 | 0.19 | 0.16 | 0.32 | 0.47 | 0.43 |

Restraints



Looking over the longer term of two years:

- Mechanical restraints remain consistently less common than physical restraints and the rates have varied very little over this time period.
- Rates for physical restraints have fluctuated more and saw an overall increase.

Over the last two quarters:

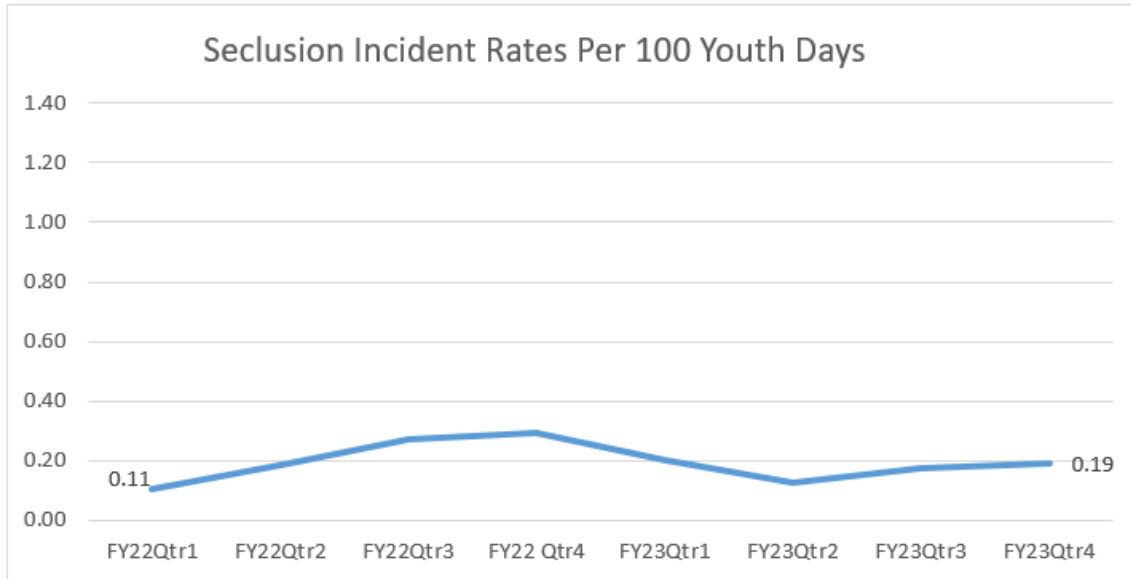
- Mechanical Restraints
 - Statewide overall rates remained the same
 - Rates have decreased overall in detention with the exceptions of Hickey and LESCC.
 - Rates increased in committed treatment programs overall.
 - Rates per 100 youth days increased at Victor Cullen Center from .02 to .07 which is the highest it has been at any point in the last eight quarters.
 - Rates per 100 youth days increased at Green Ridge from .05 to .13 which is the highest it has been at any point in the last eight quarters.
- Physical Restraints
 - Statewide overall rates increased
 - Overall in detention facilities, rates have increased with the exception of Hickey which saw a decrease.
 - In committed treatment programs, rates have increased overall and at each facility.

- Rates per 100 youth days increased at Victor Cullen Center from .14 to .22 which is the highest it has been at any point in the last eight quarters.
- Rates per 100 youth days increased at Green Ridge from .43 to .64 which is the highest it has been at any point in the last eight quarters.

The restraints increased in the last reporting period due to a number of reasons, listed below. Still, DJS deploys a number of strategies for staff to use to prevent the use of restraints, including mediation, involving behavioral health in de-escalating conflict, increased programming to keep our young people occupied, and increased groups facilitated by staff. DJS believes these increases are the result of the following variables:

- Increase in admissions overall affects the dynamic of the youth in our care.
- Specific to GRYC, there were five admissions in one day, which was an isolated incident at GRYC and is not reflective of typical admission procedure.
- Many of the incidents were caused by the same three-four youths who demonstrated problematic behaviors and were already on special management plans such as behavioral contracts and guarded care plans. As always, we are committed to doing everything possible to respond to youth with challenging behaviors without using restraints, and view them only as a last resort.
- Specific to VCC, the population of girls contributed to the increase. Staff attempted to conduct multiple interventions due to repeated conflicts amongst the girls and on occasion with other youth. These youth have significant histories of trauma and other behavioral health needs. We are working on a comprehensive strategy to work with girls in our care which is detailed below in the detention section.
- Several youths were seen by the Central Review Committee and some were removed due to aggressive assaults against staff.

Seclusion:

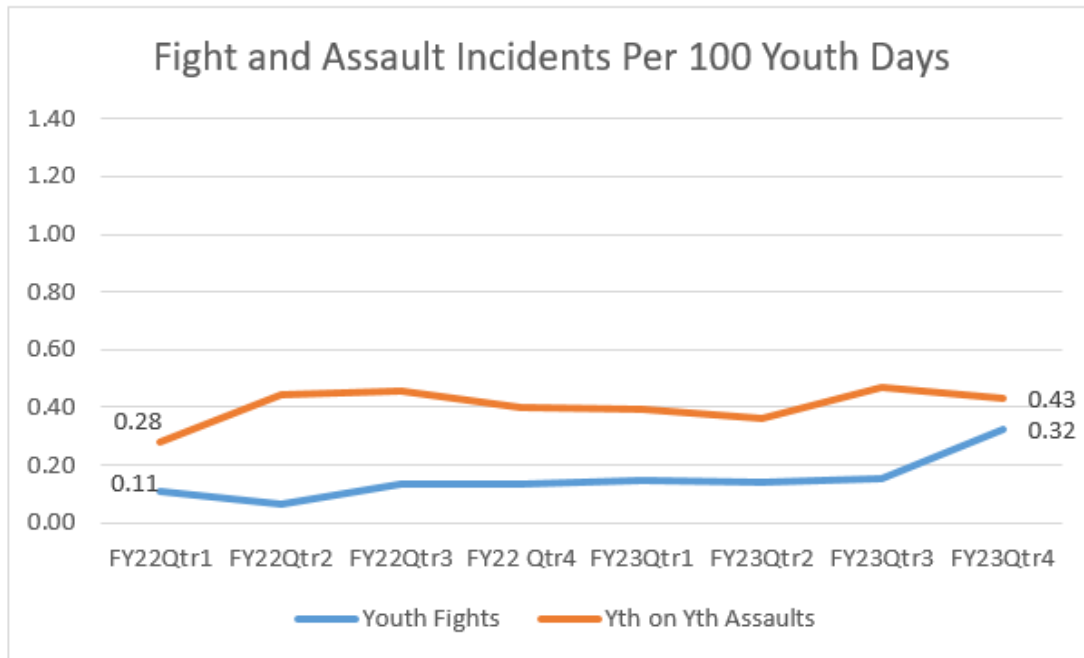


The use of seclusion is uncommon overall and has been relatively flat over the past two years with a slight uptick between the last two quarters. Fluctuations in rates over time are mostly attributable to detention facilities.

In the last two quarters, however, it should be noted that each detention facility saw a slight increase in incidents of seclusion with the exception of a decrease at BCJJC and WMCC.

Also important to note is that while committed treatment facilities have mostly reported zero incidents of seclusion, VCC reported four in the fourth quarter and two in the third quarter. DJS Administration is looking into this increased use of seclusion to ensure that seclusion is only used when absolutely necessary and in adherence to DJS policy.

Fights and Youth on Youth Assaults:



It is important to note that over the last two quarters, incidents of fights have increased overall while youth-on-youth assaults have decreased.

Looking over the longer term of two years:

- The rate of fight incidents remains consistently lower than the rate of assault incidents.
- Incidents of both fighting and assaults have increased overall.

Over the last two quarters:

- Youth fights
 - Statewide overall rates increased
 - Rates have increased overall in detention with the exception of Hickey.
 - Rates increased in committed treatment programs with the exception of GRYC which remained the same.
- Youth-on-youth assaults
 - Statewide overall rates decreased
 - In detention facilities rates have decreased overall with the exceptions of BCJJC and LESCC which saw an increase.
 - In committed treatment programs rates have decreased with the exception of Backbone Mountain YC which remained the same.

As reported in the last JJMU response, DJS is working on a strategy to institute an incident tracking and quality assurance approach to more effectively monitor and respond to critical incidents over time. We will be launching that this quarter.

Staffing Issues

DJS has experienced numerous staffing challenges across the state and various staff roles. All of our departments have been focusing on reducing callouts through a multi-prong approach, and DJS's new administration has identified this as a priority area. Since focusing on this issue, we saw tremendous decreases in employees' use of FMLA and sick leave. In the quarter this report period covers, FMLA use is down 78% and sick leave is down 17%. We will continue to work to address these issues.

Girls

DJS agrees that it is critical to approach our work with girls in our detention (and all residential facilities) distinctly. To that end, we have developed a workgroup that has been meeting regularly on this issue and are also working on a multi-year, multi-phase plan to reimagine how we work with girls in our residential facilities. The first step of that process will be to house all girls in our facilities together. We will be starting that work in October 2023. In addition, the following are some of the action steps the work group has taken:

- DJS is rolling out a collaborative case planning process for girls who are detained or at risk of detention (i.e., placed on Community Detention) that will include the youth and family, community providers, and additional perspectives from the department (such as resource staff) to develop strong community release plans that the youth and family will be more bought into, that meets their needs, and is designed to support them effectively through the pre-trial process. This is being rolled out just for girls at the current time because of the recognition that this is a population that often gets overlooked, and who often end up in confinement for reasons that have more to do with unmet needs than with public safety concerns. DJS will look into expanding it to all youth after this pilot period.
- DJS is about to complete a case file review of all girls who were detained or committed over a 9-month period. Initial findings suggest extremely high rates of trauma and history of self-injury and self-harm behavior, but also many strengths.
- DJS had a meeting with staff from the girls-focused project at the Vera Institute of Justice. Their team will be sharing information about gender responsive programming models from around the country, including short-term housing models, so girls do not end up detained for lack of a place to stay.

JUVENILE SERVICES EDUCATION PROGRAM – RESPONSE

Juvenile Services Education Program (JSEP) Response to JJMU 2023 Second Quarter Report

Mental Health

JSEP recognizes the importance of having mental health staff available in the school to assist students who are in crisis during school time. JSEP has included in its Maryland Blueprint Implementation Plan a proposal to hire social workers in our larger facilities to be available to students during the school day. These social workers would benefit the students by being able to immediately help students in crisis or with serious conflicts, mediate their concerns, and then have the students return to class. This would cause less interruption to their education and would contribute to de-escalating conflicts before they have a chance to fester into a larger problem.

The JSEP school schedule was created with a break in the middle of the day. This break allows students to attend mental health sessions during the day without taking students out of school for those important sessions. This serves the students' mental health as well as educational needs without each infringing on the other. Facility mental health plays an important role during the school day in attending to students in crisis or conflict during that time, lessening the chance of increased aggression and self-harm.

Vacancies

JSEP continues to develop creative recruiting strategies in an effort to fill all vacancies in its education program. JSEP is attending career fairs when they are available and is excited to have a recruiting event planned at the HBCU conference at the end of September. JSEP is in contact with several teacher education programs throughout the state and with programs in states bordering Maryland. We have plans to speak to the students in student teaching and internship seminars at two universities with more to come. The purpose of these meetings is to make these prospective teachers aware of the enriching and fulfilling opportunities at JSEP. Johns Hopkins has linked our positions to their student newsletter.

JSEP is excited that we have filled two positions at Victor Cullen, English and Special Education, and will continue a concerted effort to fill the rest. As vacancies are filled, the academic coordinators are working with the new, as well as the established, teachers to implement the JSEP curriculum, which replaces the use of worksheets with more projects and hands-on activities. Each curriculum is based on educational standards which will be met with a properly implemented curriculum and are used in all JSEP schools.

Post-Secondary

The number and availability of post-secondary opportunities continues to increase. The finalized MOAs with Baltimore County Community College and Anne Arundel Community College increases the number and diversity of the courses and programs available to students. With increased course offerings, JSEP has an increased ability to give students selections of

programs based on their interests rather than having the students choose from what is available. For example, there is a significant cohort of post-secondary students at Victor Cullen interested in cybersecurity. Both our new community partners have a wide variety of courses available in this field. There are several more MOAs being routed, which should be finalized shortly.

Another benefit of the increased number of programs is the likelihood that a student will be able to start a program while detained in their local community college so there will be no disruption to their post-secondary education as they transition home.

Girls

JSEP continues to focus on improving educational programming specific to the needs and interests of girls in our care. Both summer reading selections featured strong female protagonists. The girls at Cullen and LESCC are working on a Service Learning Project that was chosen based on their interest and input. JSEP will also be working closely with DJS staff on the aforementioned strategy to improve programming for girls.