



**JUVENILE JUSTICE MONITORING UNIT
STATE OF MARYLAND**

2024 FIRST QUARTER REPORT

The Maryland Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit(JJMU)

The Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit (JJMU) 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, which 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 is responsible for education services in DJS facilities, 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.



JUVENILE JUSTICE MONITORING UNIT
STATE OF MARYLAND

JJMU 2024 First 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 first quarter 2024 reports.

The Maryland Department of Juvenile Services' response and a response from the Juvenile Services Education Program (JSEP) are included, as indicated on the contents page.

The JJMU 2024 First Quarter Report compendium was produced by Margi Joshi, Nick Moroney, Tim Snyder, and Marvin Stone.

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



JUVENILE JUSTICE MONITORING UNIT
STATE OF MARYLAND

July 2024

The Honorable Wes Moore, Governor
State of Maryland

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

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

Members of the General Assembly

The Honorable Vincent Schiraldi, Secretary
Department of Juvenile Services

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

This compendium provides a summary report on conditions and operations during the first quarter of 2024 for each detention and placement facility directly operated by the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department).

Respectfully submitted,

Nick Moroney

Nick Moroney
Director, Maryland Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit

JUVENILE JUSTICE MONITORING UNIT 2024 FIRST QUARTER REPORT

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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)
- PEACE Academy for Girls (6-bed Unit inside WMCC detention center)
- Backbone Mountain and Green Ridge youth centers (two youth centers)

Incident and Population Trends

First quarter 2024 population and incident trends versus first quarter of 2023:

- ❖ The population of incarcerated youth in DJS facilities continued to rise. The average daily population (ADP) of youth rose in all DJS-operated secure detention centers. The youth population also increased in Victor Cullen committed placement center.
- ❖ Youth on youth fights and assaults in secure detention centers increased at BCJJC, CYDC, LESCC and WMCC, but decreased at Hickey. Fights and assaults also increased in committed placement at the Youth Centers.
- ❖ Physical restraints of youth by staff increased at all DJS-operated secure detention centers except for LESCC. Staff use of physical restraints on youth also increased in committed placement at the Youth Centers.
- ❖ The use of mechanical restraint (handcuffs and or leg irons) inside secure detention facilities decreased at BCJJC, CYDC, and WMCC, but increased at Hickey. Mechanical restraint usage also increased in committed placement at Cullen. Mechanical restraints were not used inside LESCC secure detention center during the first quarter of 2024.
- ❖ Incidents of reported seclusion inside secure detention centers decreased at BCJJC and WMCC but increased at Hickey and CYDC. Seclusion was not used at LESCC secure detention center.
- ❖ There were 29 incidents involving suicide ideation (up from 15 during the same period last year), no attempt at suicide, and 6 incidents of self-injurious behavior at DJS-operated facilities during the first quarter of 2024 (compared to 5 in the first quarter of 2023).

**MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE
ABUSE SERVICES INSIDE DJS
FACILITIES**

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Inside DJS Facilities

Mental health, substance abuse, and trauma-related conditions are all-too prevalent amongst youth in the juvenile justice system, and a robust array of mental health supports and services are an integral part of effective programming for justice-involved youth. Providing high-quality and individualized treatment services for young people remains a challenge in DJS-operated detention and placement facilities.

- The Department has struggled to recruit and retain qualified and culturally responsive graduate level mental health staff. The problem is especially acute at DJS placement centers located in far Western Maryland where youth should be receiving comprehensive mental health, trauma, and substance abuse-related treatment services (see the report on the Youth Centers, page 38). There are also shortages of mental health staff in the girls' detention and placement components at Western Maryland Children's Center. Girls in the juvenile justice system present with higher levels of mental health and trauma-related needs than boys, and detained and placed girls can greatly benefit from the availability of competent, experienced, and involved mental health staff during their incarceration to stay stable, receive support, learn skills, and overcome challenges. In addition to developing in-house capacity to offer gender-responsive and trauma-informed mental health services, the Department should expand the availability of community-based programs specializing in girls' care and unique experiences and counter pathways to justice system involvement.
- The Department has developed a Pending Placement Program (PPU) at Baltimore City Juvenile Detention Center (BCJJC) and Cheltenham Youth Detention Center (CYDC) that allows committed youth awaiting transfer to DJS-operated placements to begin their treatment. Prior to the establishment of the PPUs, young people waited weeks or months for a placement spot to open. The pending placement programming cuts down on the "dead time" that youth used to experience in detention during waiting periods. The pending placement program at BCJJC is well-run and undergoes continuous monitoring and enhancements by facility administration to ensure that the program functions effectively and youth treatment needs are met. However, the PPU at CYDC needs improvement as youth there report a lack of engagement in the program and an overly punitive program structure. Incidents of aggression and ejections were frequent on the PPU at CYDC throughout the first quarter of 2024.
- Mental health services inside the three largest DJS-operated detention centers are provided by an outside vendor. The Department should closely monitor the vendor contract to ensure that contract deliverables are being met with particular focus on:

- Ensuring that there are an adequate number of qualified mental health professionals assigned to the facility to provide mental health coverage to all units and that both work week and weekend coverage is being provided as agreed to per the contract terms
 - Ensuring that youth counseling sessions, psychoeducational groups, family engagement initiatives, and substance abuse counseling and treatment services are being provided in accordance with the contract and that documentation is provided to demonstrate contract compliance
 - Ensuring that youth receive prompt, individualized and effective psychiatric care to address their medication management needs. Youth have expressed concerns about delays in scheduling appointments with the psychiatrist and have voiced frequent concerns about poor bedside manner.
 - Re-evaluating contract terms to ensure that comprehensive mental health and substance abuse services are being provided to youth and rectifying any gaps in identified needs by ensuring compliance with existing requirements or amending contracts as needed to enhance the current level of services. For example, a youth at BCJJC who was exploring his sexual orientation could have benefited from LGBTQ+ resources as he navigated peer relations in a carceral environment.
- 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. These vulnerable young people often decompensate while they are stuck in DJS-operated secure detention facilities (see the BCJJC report which begins on page 11 and the Hickey report starting on page 20). Corrections-oriented staff lack the necessary temperament, skills, and professional expertise to comprehensively and therapeutically treat youth with severe behavioral and mental health needs. The Maryland juvenile justice system cannot become a default component of the State mental health system. Maryland state government and its various departments need to comprehensively and permanently address the current severe shortages of in-patient psychiatric facilities and ensure the provision of comprehensive community-based mental health services for young people.

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 youth. Black youth represented 89% of total entries during the first quarter of 2024 (compared to 92% during the same period in 2023). Hispanic/Latino youth represented 6% of entries to BCJJC during the first quarter of 2024 (compared to 4% during the same period in 2023).

BCJJC – Selected Incident Categories	Q1 2022	Q1 2023	Q1 2024
Average Daily Population (ADP)	58	63	98
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	52	51	78
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	3	7	3
3. Physical Restraint	61	44	49
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	21	12	6
5. Seclusion	17	4	3
6. Contraband	4	5	10
7. Suicide Ideation	4	7	1
8. Suicide Attempt	1	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	0	0	0

The average daily population at BCJJC increased by 56% during the first quarter of 2024 compared to the first quarter in 2023. When further comparing the same two time periods:

- The number of youth-on-youth incidents involving aggression increased by 53%, staff physical restraints of youth increased slightly, and incidents involving contraband doubled.
- Alleged youth-on-staff assaults, staff use of handcuffs and shackles on youth inside the facility, reported seclusions, and instances of suicide ideation decreased.

Physical Plant

The physical plant of the detention component at BCJJC continues to be rife with issues involving the heating and cooling system which resulted in cold classrooms and living units during the first quarter of 2023. Conditions were so uncomfortable in classrooms in the winter months that in-person school was cancelled during a monitoring visit until heat could be restored to the school area. Youth also reported having to take cold showers during the quarter.

Youth and staff reported roach and ant infestations and rodent sightings which have been exacerbated by recent construction inside the building undertaken to add additional classroom space and offices to the facility. Consistent and effective extermination and HVAC services are needed to maintain a habitable environment throughout the building for both youth and staff.

The facility fire alarm was not working for three days during the first quarter of 2024 and put youth and staff at risk in the case of a fire emergency.

Facility Security

Adherence to basic security protocols could further reduce incidents inside the facility. In Incident 177260, youth from one unit were able to access and charge at youth in another unit via an unsecured door. During a monitoring visit in the first quarter of 2024, another door was found to have been left unsecured which could have allowed youth from one unit to access another unit. Staff and supervisors should always ensure that doors are secure upon every entry and exit to prevent youth from accessing unauthorized areas.

Contraband

Curbing the flow of contraband inside DJS facilities has become increasingly challenging.

In Incident 176947, a cell phone and a vape pen were found in a living unit shower area.

In Incident 177672, a staffer tried to bring in contraband, including a cell phone, after returning from a break. The staffer no longer works at the facility.

In Incident 177009, staff reported that several youth on a unit were nodding off, slurring their words and agitated. One of the youth admitted to being “high” (Incident 177009).

Suboxone strips were found several times on different youth during searches which took place during the first quarter of 2024 (Incidents 177085 and 177674).

Incidents involving contraband should be thoroughly investigated by the Department and a comprehensive strategy to address contraband issues inside facilities should be developed based on the findings. Young people found to be engaged in illicit drug use while in DJS custody should receive individualized substance abuse counseling and treatment.

Youth With High Mental Health Needs

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. These vulnerable young people often decompensate while they are stuck in DJS-operated secure detention facilities. Corrections-oriented staff lack the necessary temperament, skills, and professional expertise to comprehensively and therapeutically treat youth with severe behavioral and mental health needs as their primary modes of interaction are to elicit youth compliance through verbal directives, restraints, and isolation (seclusion). These practices are likely to exacerbate youth mental health issues while the objective should be to recognize and attempt to address the problem.

Due to a statewide lack of accessible, effective community-based residential and non-residential mental health resources, youth with severe mental health needs frequently become ensnared within the juvenile justice system and get cycled through DJS-operated detention and placement centers where administrators and staff struggle to manage challenging behaviors which arise from a past history of unaddressed and untreated trauma and mental illness. For example, a youth with extensive trauma-related needs and with a history of involvement in the child welfare and juvenile justice system was shuffled around various DJS-operated detention centers (Lower Eastern Shore Children’s Center, Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center, Cheltenham, and Hickey) from November 2023 to May of 2024. The youth exhibited consistent patterns of self-injurious and disruptive behaviors including breaking apart light fixtures and plastic items to retrieve parts for self-harm; destroying furniture including unit telephones, TVs, and computers; and becoming highly assaultive and antagonistic to staff and other youth. During the youth’s tenure at BCJJC at the beginning of the first quarter of 2024, the youth destroyed a unit telephone and unit television and had to be kept separated from other youth who were threatening retaliation for his destructive behavior which detrimentally impacted their access to unit amenities. The Department’s mental health vendor did not refer the youth for outside evaluation and treatment and, at the same time, did not provide the appropriate level of expertise to provide effective services for him during his time in secure detention.

The Maryland juvenile justice system cannot become a default component of the State mental health system. Maryland state government and its various departments need to comprehensively and permanently address the current severe shortages of in-patient psychiatric facilities and comprehensive community-based mental health services.

Family engagement, Activities and Programming

Administrators have made family engagement a priority at BCJJC and hold monthly family engagement events that are often centered around seasonal holidays, and which are open to all youth and their families.

Phone calls to loved ones remain the primary method of contact that youth have with their families. Phone service for youth in all DJS-operated facilities is provided by Global Tel Link (GTL), a for-profit prison communications corporation. Phones provided by GTL break down frequently, and it can take several days to weeks to repair broken phones because of a lack of service technicians assigned to attend to phones inside DJS facilities. During the first quarter of 2024, phones on one unit at BCJJC were not working and it took over a week to repair the equipment. In addition to equipment in disrepair, youth often report that phone connections are poor and that calls often drop. Furthermore, most units in BCJJC have only one GTL phone for youth to use. Young people report that the lack of an additional phone on the units creates avoidable conflict which can result in skirmishes over who gets access to the phone to make calls. The Department should develop a comprehensive solution to ongoing GTL equipment and phone connection issues, and each unit at BCJJC should have at least two phones for youth use.

Administrators at BCJJC have set up a beats studio and it is a popular incentive activity among youth, however several youth reported that access to the music studio was limited during the beginning of the first quarter of 2024. Administrators should ensure this resource is consistently available for youth use.

A father's group is held twice a week for young people who have children. The program could benefit from a formal curriculum to help provide structure to the groups.

Muslim youth report a lack of availability of on-site services, and virtual services are often cancelled. The Department should conduct outreach to local organizations to provide youth in DJS custody who identify as Muslim with religious programming and mentorship tailored to their needs.

Pending Placement Units (PPUs)

There are two pending placement units (PPUs) inside BCJJC that allow committed youth awaiting transfer to DJS-operated placements to begin their treatment. The pending placement program cuts down on the "dead time" that youth used to experience in detention. Prior to the establishment of the PPU's, young people waited weeks or months for a placement spot to open in order to begin treatment. The pending placement units at

BCJJC are well managed and consist of a cohesive team of staff, case managers, and DJS mental health professionals. There is an extensive orientation process before youth enter the unit as well as ongoing mental health supports and services, structured programming and family engagement opportunities (developed by the PPU team) once youth enter the program. Youth investment in the program is high and ejections are rare. When youth are ejected from the PPU unit for behavioral issues at BCJJC, they are provided an opportunity to return after completing a structured curriculum to assist them in developing their readiness to continue with treatment. The PPU program at the facility is also continually internally monitored and adapted to better serve the needs of youth.

Education

Starting in mid-2022, an independent Juvenile Services Education Program (JSEP) Board and schools' superintendent took over responsibility (from the Maryland State Department of Education) for education services inside DJS facilities, with implementation and resource assistance from DJS.

During the first quarter of 2024, the school at BCJJC assisted in providing support for a women's day event and for black history-related events held at the facility throughout the quarter. In addition, several students at BCJJC passed GED tests and graduation ceremonies were held to mark their achievement.

There were several vacancies during the reporting period for education-related positions at the school inside BCJJC, including openings for math, science, physical education, social studies and special education teachers.

Cheltenham Youth Detention Center

Cheltenham Youth Detention Center (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% of total youth entries during the first quarter of 2024 compared to 71% during the first quarter of 2023. Hispanic/Latino youth represented 15% of entries during the first quarter of 2024, compared to 17% during the same period in 2023.

CYDC– Selected Incident Categories	Q1 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2024
Average Daily Population (ADP)	38	63	69
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	30	54	66
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	10	9	4
3. Physical Restraint	73	67	76
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	13	14	5
5. Seclusion	38	22	32
6. Contraband	4	8	5
7. Suicide Ideation	9	0	1
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	6	4	2

The average daily population at CYDC increased by 10% when comparing the first quarter of 2024 with the same period last year. To further compare the same two periods:

- Youth on youth aggression and reported use of seclusion remained high at Cheltenham (see the incident table section for the similarly sized Hickey detention center as a useful comparison).

- Fights and assaults among youth at the facility increased by 22% compared with the same time period last year. Reported seclusion usage increased by 45% and physical restraint of youth by staff increased by 13%, when comparing the first quarter of 2024 with the same time last year.
- Use of mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) decreased by 64% and incidents involving contraband also decreased.

Group Dynamics

Cheltenham staff continued to struggle with managing group dynamics on living units and frequently engaged in separating youth or groups of youth from each other, in efforts to maintain control. This practice involved separated individuals taking turns receiving in-person school services and attending recreation, an approach which is not in accord with best practices, and which also complicates programming schedules.

Staff also engaged in a pattern of violating DJS policy on seclusion by placing kids alone inside a locked TV room located within a unit dayroom when they were being separated from other youth, even though the confined youth posed no imminent threat to safety and security. While youth were not allowed to leave the room, seclusion reporting and documentation protocols were not followed in these situations and youth safety was not ensured during these impromptu periods of unauthorized isolation. Some youth became agitated when locked in the TV room and began to deteriorate mentally and break things apart in the room (Incident 177235 and 177152). In those instances, youth were subsequently restrained and then locked in their individual cells.

To reduce reliance on inappropriate separation and de facto and regular seclusions at Cheltenham, the Department should offer support, technical expertise, and enhanced training to facility administration and staff on managing youth group dynamics, recognizing the early signs of potential conflict, and exercising de-escalation techniques and employing restorative responses to address friction among youth to stabilize the facility milieu. Administrators at the Department and at the CYDC facility need to proactively provide opportunities so that youth can be productively occupied, which would also cut down the boredom, anxiety and frustration that leads some youth to act out in the first place. Punishing youth through separation and with behavior reports is contributing to a negative milieu at CYDC.

Programming

Some special events programming and activities are offered at Cheltenham, including during seasonal holidays such as Valentine's Day and Superbowl Sunday. However, participation in most programming events is behavior based and youth who receive any behavioral infraction are prohibited from attending. Behavior reports can be

issued by any staff and for anything from non-compliance to cursing to engaging in assaultive behavior. Less than half of the youth at Cheltenham were eligible to attend a Gospel Choir performance during Black History Month and similar restrictions prevented many youth from attending a family engagement dance event for mothers and sons for Valentine's Day. Even basic activities such as Spades card game tournaments and bingo or movie nights which are advertised on the units are behavior based and many youth are routinely ineligible to participate. Aside from Christian religious programs offered by outside volunteers, there are few constructive and positive outlets in which all youth can partake. Creating programming options for all youth - including those accused of minor infractions and even those presenting with severe challenges - can improve facility culture and help reduce incidents by fostering a sense of inclusiveness and belonging as well as providing opportunities for skill building and positive engagement.

Young people at Cheltenham play video and card games, listen to the radio, work on puzzles, and watch TV to pass time during after-school and weekend hours. However, electronic equipment such as TVs and game systems are frequently malfunction or break and can take several months to replace, while puzzles, games, and cards are not consistently provided or replaced after they become worn or torn. Extreme boredom is common for youth placed in the infirmary and they endure restricted movement and shortened school days and have no designated case manager to help address their needs. Administrators should routinely conduct rounds of all living units and the infirmary and continually assess the timely provision of basic living needs and activities, and then proactively ensure that youth are provided with requested and approved items for use during leisure periods.

Cheltenham has a community advisory board that takes an active role in improving programming for youth and their families. The advisory board identified a local muralist who has beautified and humanized the facility environment by creating a large mural covering the main hallway of the detention center. A small number of youth were occasionally allowed to assist in painting the mural. Youth who expressed interest in art were selected to participate if they were free from behavior reports (the disciplinary reports issued by staff). The advisory board also organized a resource fair for parents and youth at the facility, and plans are underway for a summer event sponsored by the advisory board.

Pending Placement Units (PPU)

There is a pending placement unit (PPU) inside CYDC that allows committed youth awaiting transfer to a placement facility to begin treatment programming while at Cheltenham. Prior to the establishment of the PPU, young people would have to wait weeks or months until they were transferred to a placement facility before beginning

treatment programming. For those youth who are scheduled to go to a DJS-operated placement facility, the detention-based pending placement program cuts down on the extended “dead time” that youth experienced in detention facilities before the current initiative started.

While the pending placement unit at CYDC - and the PPUs at BCJJC - are welcome service additions, many youth at CYDC report that the pending placement unit there is not well managed, and that the PPU staff are more punitive toward youth than the staffers in the regular detention units at Cheltenham. The young people in the CYDC PPU said that there are not enough activities and programming to keep them engaged and motivated in treatment. Staff on the unit struggle to address conflict and incidents of aggression on the unit and many youth have been ejected from the pending placement unit at CYDC because the facility could not therapeutically address their behavioral needs. Once thrown out, some of the ejected youth requested the opportunity to “earn” their way out of general population units and back into the pending placement unit, however there is no mechanism set up at CYDC to allow youth to do so. At BCJJC, staff developed a curriculum for ejected youth eager to return to a PPU at that facility. The aim of the curriculum is to increase youth readiness to receive therapeutic services and so youth are able to earn their way back into a PPU at BCJJC - youth at CYDC should have the same opportunity. The Department should improve staff training, structure, and services inside the PPU at Cheltenham to meet the therapeutic needs of committed youth.

Education

Starting in mid-2022, an independent Juvenile Services Education Program (JSEP) board and schools’ superintendent took over responsibility for education services inside DJS facilities, with implementation and resource assistance from DJS.

During the reporting period, the school at Cheltenham was almost fully staffed, with vacancies for a records clerk and an English Language Learners (ELL) teacher.

After-school clubs were held at CYDC during the first quarter of 2024 and were open to any student that wanted to participate. Students find these extracurricular outlets enjoyable and productive, and after-school programming has been a valuable addition to help alleviate excessive downtime during after-school and evening hours. Education staff at Cheltenham also led initiatives to bring in speakers for Black History month and - with help from community volunteers from Howard University - hosted an entrepreneurship series with youth developing and pitching ideas for their own businesses.

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 accounted for 79% of entries during the first quarter of 2024, a decrease of 5% compared to the same period in 2023. Hispanic/Latino accounted for 15% of entries during the first quarter of this year, up from 3% at the same time in 2023.

Hickey – Selected Incident Categories	Q1 2022	Q1 2023	Q1 2024
Average Daily Population (ADP)	41	54	68
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	44	64	38
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	1	0	1
3. Physical Restraint	47	71	81
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	13	10	18
5. Seclusion	12	14	20
6. Contraband	3	3	5
7. Suicide Ideation	2	1	6
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	0	0	1

The average daily population of youth in Hickey increased by 26% when comparing the first quarter of 2024 with the same time in 2023.

Further comparing the first quarter of 2024 with the same time last year:

- Incidents involving youth-on-youth fights and assaults decreased by 41%.

- Physical restraints of youth by staff increased by 14%, incidents resulting in seclusion rose by 43%, and use of mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) inside the facility increased substantially.
- Incidents involving contraband and instances of suicide ideation also increased.

Safety and Security: Contraband

Curbing the flow of contraband inside DJS facilities has been an emerging challenge. In Incident 177711, a staff cell phone was found on Hickey grounds, and during May of 2024, illegal drugs were found on Hickey youth and several youth from one unit were observed to be under the influence of illicit substances. Ongoing concerns about illegal substances being brought into the facility are under investigation by the DJS Office of Inspector General.

Culturally Competent Care

Hispanic young people reported feeling marginalized and said they were not receiving adequate interpreter services during the reporting period. In Incident 177268, a non-English speaking Hispanic student had his pants pulled down by a peer and a group of peers laughed at him. The youth reported that staff did not respond to the incident. The youth wanted to process the incident with staff but could not communicate his feelings because his assigned interpreter left early and was not available. Another Hispanic youth reported that his interpreter is often late to arrive and frequently leaves early. Some Hispanic youth reported struggling and feeling left behind at school because of language barriers and unaddressed gaps in education services during their migration journey.

Youth With Complex Mental Health Needs

Youth in need of specialized and intensive mental health services continue to be inappropriately placed by the Courts and the Department in detention environments. Hickey struggled to meet the needs of several youth with serious behavioral health issues which resulted in increased incident numbers. Corrections-oriented staff often lack the necessary temperament, skills, and professional expertise to comprehensively and therapeutically treat youth with severe behavioral and mental health needs as their primary modes of interaction are to elicit youth compliance through verbal directives, restraints, and isolation (seclusion). These practices are likely to exacerbate youth mental health issues while the objective should be to recognize and attempt to address them.

Due to a statewide lack of accessible, effective community-based residential and non-residential mental health resources, youth with severe mental health needs frequently become ensnared within the juvenile justice system and get cycled through DJS-operated detention and placement centers where administrators and staff struggle to manage challenging behaviors which arise from a past history of unaddressed and untreated trauma and mental illness. For example, a youth with extensive trauma-related

needs and with a history of involvement in the child welfare and juvenile justice system was shuffled around various DJS-operated detention centers (Lower Eastern Shore Children's Center, Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center, Cheltenham, and Hickey) from November 2023 to May of 2024. The youth exhibited consistent patterns of self-injurious and disruptive behaviors including breaking apart light fixtures and plastic items to retrieve parts for self-harm; destroying furniture and equipment including unit telephones, TVs, and computers; and becoming highly assaultive and antagonistic to staff and other youth.

During the youth's tenure at Hickey during the first quarter of 2024, he was housed by himself in a back area of a living unit and also received education services while on the unit. The Department's mental health vendor did not refer the youth for outside evaluation and treatment and, at the same time, did not provide the appropriate level of expertise to ensure effective services for him during his time in secure detention.

Another high needs youth at Hickey was involved in multiple incidents within a ten-day period and was moved to Cheltenham detention center where he also struggled.

A youth with a history of in-patient psychiatric hospitalizations who was detained at Hickey reported that his medication was not helping him and that he was experiencing bouts of deep depression intermingled with hyper-activity. He was involved in several incidents of aggression during the first quarter of 2024, including an attempt to assault a teacher who the youth alleged made inappropriate comments about the youth's deceased mother. The youth said that the teacher made a negative comment about the youth's mother passing away from a drug overdose. The teacher later denied making any such comment, while a DJS staffer who was present at the time of the incident told a monitor that the teacher did make such a comment.

The Maryland juvenile justice system cannot become a default component of the State mental health system. Maryland state government and its various departments needs to comprehensively and permanently address the current severe shortages of in-patient psychiatric facilities and also to ensure the availability of comprehensive community-based mental health services for young people in our state.

Recreation and Activities

The Hickey administration and staff are involved in continuous, inclusive efforts to create and offer all youth incarcerated there a variety of meaningful activities and outlets for positive engagement and on a regular basis. Programmed and family engagement events offered to all youth on campus include a Boys-to-Men mentorship program, a weekend basketball clinic, regularly scheduled and specially themed family engagement nights to increase positive interaction and communication between youth and their loved ones, and an art show involving youth-created art. There are two full time and seasoned recreation staff at the facility who develop a variety of programming options for kids including participation in various sports such as volleyball, basketball, table tennis, and the use of gym equipment for strength training. The inclusive approach to offering

opportunities for constructive activities to all youth at Hickey should be replicated at the Cheltenham facility.

Youth have expressed an interest in parenting classes and in a music (beats) room/studio. Although materials and equipment for a music room are already present at Hickey, administrators have not utilized available resources to create a music program.

Family Engagement

Administrators at Hickey hold regularly scheduled family engagement events for youth and their families. Family engagement-related happenings during the quarter included a “Beats and Bingo” event, a family game night, and special meals provided during visitation.

Phone calls to loved ones remain the primary method of contact that youth in all DJS-operated detention and placement facilities have with their families. Phone service for youth is provided by Global Tel Link (GTL), a for-profit prison communications corporation. Phones provided by GTL often break and it can take several days or weeks to repair broken phones due to a lack of available service technicians. In addition, youth consistently report that connections are often poor, and that calls frequently disconnect before the allotted time is up. The Department should develop a comprehensive solution to ongoing GTL equipment and phone connection issues.

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.

Youth in JSEP schools attend classes by unit and not by grade, and students ranging in grades from 6th to 12th grade are often in the same class. This format makes it difficult to provide tailored lesson plans for each student or to provide support based on the student’s academic level. During the quarter, students expressed frustration at having to take quizzes and tests based on material that was below or above their grade level.

After-school clubs held at Hickey during the first quarter of 2024 included chess, comic book club, and cooking. Students find these extracurricular outlets enjoyable and productive, and after-school programming has been a valuable addition which helps alleviate excessive downtime during after-school and evening hours.

During the reporting period, there were vacancies at Hickey for math, science, and social studies teachers.

Shelter Care

There is a shelter care program for boys and girls on the grounds of the facility but outside the fence of the Hickey detention component. The program started in 2022 and is overseen by DJS administrators from the Hickey detention center. Direct-care staff from Hickey also supervise the youth in shelter care, and the Department provides case management and mental health services. Young people at the shelter continue to complain about a surfeit of down time and about boredom that comes with little to do. There has not been a concerted, sustained effort to arrange for off-site recreational, enrichment and community engagement activities, and there are often delays in enrolling kids in (Baltimore County) schools. Community resources need to be leveraged to offer kids opportunities for growth based on individualized interests and needs, and a schedule of shelter-specific outings, events, and activities needs to be created and implemented.

Thomas J.S. Waxter Children's Center

The Thomas J.S. Waxter Children's Center (Waxter) in 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 facility, which closed in March of 2022, was aged, cramped and in disrepair. 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. Girls at Waxter were transferred to Noyes 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 in Cheltenham, Prince George's County (CYDC), until repairs could be made to the Noyes AC unit. The girls were transported back to the Noyes facility at Rockville in June of 2022.

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

Detained girls remained at CYDC until October of 2023, when they were moved to Western Maryland Children's Center (WMCC) located in Hagerstown, Maryland. When capacity is reached at that facility, newly detained girls are taken to Lower Easter Shore Detention Center in Salisbury. At time of writing, WMCC houses girls and young women in placement and pending placement status, as well as those in detention.

Girls in the juvenile justice system have different medical, reproductive health, mental health, and trauma-related needs than boys. They deserve adequate space, services and a setting that is tailored to meet their circumstances.

Alfred D. Noyes Children's Center

The Alfred D. Noyes Children's Center, located in Montgomery County, was a Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) owned and operated maximum security detention center with a DJS-rated population capacity of 29.

Noyes was temporarily closed in early December of 2021, and boys and girls then housed at Noyes were moved to other DJS detention centers. DJS converted the facility to an all-girls detention center, and girls who would have been housed at the all-girls Waxter detention center in Laurel (which had an aged and deteriorating physical plant) were moved to Noyes on March 1, 2022. Due to both facility conditions at Noyes and staffing issues at the Cheltenham facility, detained girls were displaced several times throughout 2022.

In April of 2022, an air conditioner handler unit caught fire at the Noyes facility and girls were relocated and housed on one unit at Cheltenham Youth Detention Center (CYDC) for boys until repairs could be made to the Noyes AC unit. The girls and young women were transported back to the Noyes facility in June of 2022.

In mid-October of 2022, the Noyes facility was again temporarily shuttered and detained girls and young women awaiting adjudication and many of the staffers from Noyes were transferred to Cheltenham, to increase staff availability at CYDC.

Detained girls remained at CYDC until October of 2023, when they were moved to Western Maryland Children's Center (WMCC) located in Hagerstown, Maryland. When capacity is reached at that facility, newly detained girls are taken to Lower Easter Shore Detention Center in Salisbury. At time of writing, WMCC houses girls and young women in placement and pending placement status, as well as those in detention.

The facility at Noyes was staffed by people experienced in working constructively and empathetically with detained girls and young women. The physical plant consisted of several living units, a separate school area, and outdoor space which allowed staff to better manage group dynamics. The location of Noyes in Rockville, Montgomery County, enabled DJS and the education administration at Noyes to leverage local resources to benefit both youth and staff, and the results included enhanced education services.

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 girls¹, they deserve adequate space, services and a setting that is tailored to meet their circumstances.

¹ 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: [Hawai'i Is So Close to Ending the Incarceration of Young Girls | Vera Institute](https://www.vera.org/ending-mass-incarceration/reducing-incarceration/reducing-jail-and-prison-population/ending-girls-incarceration-). 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->

Lower Eastern Shore Children’s Center

The Lower Eastern Shore Children’s Center (LESCC) is a hardware secure detention center located in Salisbury. 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 77% of entries during the first quarter of 2024, down from 79% during the same time period last year. Hispanic/Latino youth accounted for 11% of youth entries in the first quarter of 2024.

LESCC – Selected Incident Categories	Q1 2022	Q1 2023	Q1 2024
Average Daily Population (ADP)	16	16	18
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	9	7	10
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	1	1	3
3. Physical Restraint	42	25	25
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	1	0	0
5. Seclusion	1	1	0
6. Contraband	1	1	1
7. Suicide Ideation	3	0	1
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	0	1	2

The average daily youth population at LESCC was 18 during the first quarter of 2024 versus 16 during the first quarter of 2023. Youth on youth fights and assaults and alleged youth on staff assaults rose slightly when comparing the two time periods.

[initiative#:~:text=Vera's%20Initiative%20to%20End%20Girls,juvenile%20legal%20system%20by%202030.](#)

LESCC has experienced leadership that promotes a therapeutic approach to youth while in detention and strives to minimize the use of potentially traumatizing practices such as seclusion and mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) on young people. Neither seclusion nor mechanical restraints were used on kids inside the facility during the first quarter of 2024.

The mental health team plays a vital role in fostering a therapeutic culture at LESCC. There are vacancies for mental health clinicians at LESCC that should be filled without delay.

Youth requested more activities to keep them constructively occupied on weekends and during evening hours on weekdays. After-school clubs held at LESCC were popular and well-attended by youth during the first quarter of 2024. After-school programming should be expanded and continue to be offered at LESCC and other DJS facilities on an ongoing basis.

Western Maryland Children’s Center

Western Maryland Children’s Center (WMCC), located in Washington County, is a 24-bed maximum security detention center for girls owned and operated by the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department). WMCC consists of three living units: a larger sized unit which contains 12 cells; and two smaller living units that have six cells in each. Black youth represented 68% of total youth entries during the first quarter of 2024 compared to 84% over the same period in 2023. Hispanic/Latina youth accounted for 12% of total youth entries in the first quarter of 2024.

WMCC – Selected Incident Categories	Q1 2022	Q1 2023	Q1 2024
Average Daily Population (ADP)	14	13	21
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	11	4	12
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	3	4	1
3. Physical Restraint	34	30	49
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	6	14	10
5. Seclusion	5	9	3
6. Contraband	2	0	2
7. Suicide Ideation	1	0	0
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	0	1	0

The average daily population at WMCC increased by 62% during the first quarter of 2024 compared with the same time last year. Fights amongst youth tripled in number and physical restraints of youth by staff increased by 63%. However, instances of seclusion substantially decreased as did usage of mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) within the facility.

Girls in the Juvenile Justice System

WMCC was converted to an all-girls detention center in October of 2023 and all detained girls in DJS custody were transferred there. When capacity for detained girls is reached at that facility, newly detained girls are taken to Lower Easter Shore Detention Center (LESCC) in Salisbury.

DJS lacks a committed placement facility solely devoted to girls' needs. Beginning in February of 2024, one 6-person living unit within WMCC detention center has been reserved for girls committed to hardware secure placement. At time of writing, WMCC continues to house girls and young women in placement and pending placement status, as well as those in detention.

WMCC is far from most of the incarcerated girls' communities and families and many girls have expressed concerns about maintaining family contact when housed at WMCC. Outdoor and classroom space is limited at WMCC. The Department should move forward with plans to expand classroom space at the facility.

The Department lacked an adequate transition plan for converting the previously all-male WMCC detention center into a combined detention and placement center tailored to the needs of girls. The facility was severely understaffed during the first quarter of 2024. Staff from all-boys detention and placement centers were recruited to provide temporary assistance to bolster staffing, and administrators were often required to be in coverage to make up for a lack of available supervisors. Most staff currently on the ground at WMCC lack experience and expertise in working with a female population, and the one-day training provided to staff about girls in the juvenile justice system was not sufficient to enable a high functioning program for girls and young women. Successful implementation of a program designed to meet the needs of girls at a minimum requires ongoing training, mentorship, guidance, support and evaluation from professionals experienced in providing care to justice-involved girls and young women.

Having a smaller-sized facility dedicated to the care of justice-involved girls and young women presents an opportunity to address the unique medical, reproductive health, mental health, and trauma-related needs of females in the juvenile justice system. However, the Department must demonstrate a commitment to securing resources for girls in order for this opportunity to be fully realized. Areas in need of immediate attention at WMCC include:

- The need to develop professional capacity at the facility by filling positions for direct-care and supervisory staff with individuals with experience in working with girls and/or with individuals who are highly motivated and passionate about working with girls and open to learning about and implementing best practices as it relates to girls' care.

- The need for intensive ongoing staff training as staff struggle to provide adequate structure and supervision and both staff and youth describe conditions as chaotic. There were several incidents in which girls allegedly engaged in the physical touching of each

other leading to mandated PREA² investigations. Girls also reported frequent bullying on living units and reported that staff were indifferent or did not intervene to stop the behavior. The Department should provide more extensive and ongoing training about the particular needs of girls in the system with emphasis on creating structure, establishing boundaries, and developing rapport with girls to help establish physical and emotional safety and provide the appropriate environmental conditions for healing and growth. Additionally, security cameras should be updated to fix blind spots in the common areas of the living units to promote staff accountability and safety.

-The need to increase the number of mental health professionals assigned to the facility. Currently, three mental health clinicians provide support for both the committed placement program and the detention component at WMCC. Each program (committed and placement) should have its own designated team of mental health staff given the high trauma and mental health-related needs of girls in the system. In the long term, committed girls should have their own treatment center and services should ideally be provided in a non-correctional setting by community-based providers with experience in gender-responsive care and the ability to offer specialized and individualized services and supports.

-The need for more and better programming. Girls at WMCC frequently report the need for more programming and “something to look forward to” in order to avoid boredom, frustration and friction, especially during the weekends. Youth engagement in constructive endeavors can greatly reduce the number of incidents that arise out of boredom. The Department should invest in the introduction of more creative and gender-responsive programming options for kids at WMCC and should utilize the incarcerated young people’s suggestions and recommendations to develop appropriate programming. Girls in the committed program should have opportunities to engage in volunteer, enrichment, educational, and employment activities in the surrounding local communities.

-The need to replace correctional practices that are geared toward control and compliance with trauma-responsive and individualized approaches to youth care and treatment. For example, the Department recently spent money to refurbish living quarters at WMCC by adding a desk space inside youth cells to allow incarcerated kids to have reading and studying space. Despite this improvement, girls rarely get access to the re-designed space because DJS administrators from headquarters issued a blanket rule which prohibits girls from access to their cells during waking hours. One girl in the committed program who was studying for the GED reported that girls are stuck on their small living unit for much of the weekend and the young woman asked for the ability to go to her cell to study because the living unit is consistently loud with constant yelling and arguments, making it hard for her to concentrate on her work. She was told that, because of the rules, she was not allowed to study in her cell.

² PREA or The Prison Rape Elimination Act (2003) is a federal law aimed at helping to prevent sexual abuse of people confined in jails and prisons.

In addition, youth engaging in acting out behaviors are often placed in a “quiet room”, a bare, unfurnished closet-like space, to de-escalate. The “quiet room” should be converted to a “comfort” room that youth can use if they want, and it should be furnished with a comfortable sitting area and calming tools to help young people self-soothe and learn and practice self-regulation skills.

-The need to create more community-based resources for girls and young women in the juvenile justice system. Many girls find themselves in the deep end of the system because of a lack of resources in the community to address their needs.

One girl in the committed placement unit at WMCC was adjudicated on theft charges relating to her drug addiction. She needs and is motivated to receive intensive drug treatment services, but the State of Maryland lacks residential and non-residential treatment options for girls with a history of severe substance abuse and trauma-related needs. She reported to her judge that her mental health has deteriorated during her incarceration. She has her high school diploma and is interested in higher education and employment options yet work programs and in-person community college programs are not available to the girls and young women at this time (even though college options are available for boys and young men in DJS placement centers).

Girls in treatment should receive targeted, appropriate attention and specialized services based on their individual needs and interests, in addition to opportunities for community engagement which also need to be provided.

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 27 youth. Black youth represented 73% of total entries during the first quarter of 2024 compared with 87% during the same period in 2023. Hispanic/Latino youth accounted for 11% of total youth entries in the first quarter of 2024.

Victor Cullen – Selected Incident Categories	Q1 2022	Q1 2023	Q1 2024
Average Daily Population (ADP)	13	22	26
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	3	11	11
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	1	1	1
3. Physical Restraint	7	18	13
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	3	3	4
5. Seclusion	1	2	2
6. Contraband	0	2	5
7. Suicide Ideation	1	0	1
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	1	0	1

The average daily population at Cullen increased by 18% when comparing the first quarter of this year with the same time in 2023. Further comparison of the same two time periods shows that the number of youth fights remained constant (at 11) and staff usage of physical restraints on youth decreased by 28%. Use of handcuffs and/or leg irons on youth inside the facility increased slightly.

Basic Needs

Several young people incarcerated at Cullen reported that facility administrators are not responsive in ensuring that youth are provided with basic needs and that they faced long delays in receiving inventory items such as clothing and hygiene items during

the first quarter of 2024. In addition, basic hygiene items such as soap are heavily rationed and provided in insufficient quantity to maintain cleanliness. Youth often have to purchase these items using points earned through the behavior management program to maintain their hygiene. Youth also reported that items provided to help with downtime at Cullen, such as individual DVD players, are withheld by some staff which contributes to tension and power struggles between staff and youth. Administration should check in with young people frequently and ensure that their needs are met, and that staff act consistently.

Case Management Services

Facility case managers play a vital role during the course of a youth's incarceration. They facilitate contact with families; with DJS community case managers that are working on the child's case; and with attorneys handling youths' cases. Facility case managers also track youth progress in the placement's program. Highly skilled facility case managers can serve as advocates, mentors, and positive role models for youth.

Incarcerated young people should have access to case management services from highly qualified case management professionals on a consistent basis.

There was a shortage of case managers during the first quarter of 2024 which affected programming at Cullen.

-Youth on a unit reported not seeing their case manager on the unit for over a month.

-Case managers are responsible for updating youth treatment hours and for completing the community re-entry process. Youth reported delays in both areas during the first quarter, leading them to feel frustrated and confused about their status in the program.

-Youth reported that right of access to attorney calls was not being accommodated in a timely manner. One case manager communicated that attorney calls were at the discretion of the case manager and that she would "think about it" in response to a youth's request for a call to his lawyer.

Recreational Activities and Programming

The designated recreation specialists at Victor Cullen lack initiative in creating a variety of structured programming during recreation time. A dedicated direct-care staff member has taken it on herself to develop activities programming and has made efforts to provide arts and crafts, puzzles, games and other pastimes for youth stuck on living units during the week, but weekend activities remain limited.

Staffing shortages negatively impacted on youth access to the off-site work program (called YOLO) during the reporting period. Youth enrolled in the program missed work on days when there was not enough staffing available to escort the youth to job sites. This issue has not been resolved as staffing availability problems persist. Additionally, youth in the work program requested but did not initially receive work gloves

and safety goggles. Administrators should ensure youth have the supplies and clothing necessary for safe working conditions.

Youth of the Muslim faith reported difficulties receiving prayer rugs, kufis, and consistent access to religious services.

Family engagement

In-person visitation remains poorly attended in part because Cullen is located far from where most youth and their families live. The Department should explore options to increase family involvement for committed kids including providing consistent and reliable transportation services for families in need.

Phone calls to loved ones remain the primary method of contact that youth in DJS-operated facilities have with their families. Phone service for youth in all DJS-operated facilities is provided by Global Tel Link (GTL), a for-profit prison communications corporation. Phones provided by GTL often break and it can take several days or weeks to repair the broken phones due to a lack of available service technicians. During the first quarter of 2024, phones on one unit at Cullen were not working and it took days to repair the issue. In addition to equipment in disrepair, youth at Cullen often report that phone connections are poor and that calls drop frequently. The Department should develop a comprehensive solution to ongoing GTL equipment and phone connection issues.

Mental Health

Mental health services at Cullen have improved with the hiring of two full-time psychologists with experience in providing culturally competent and trauma-informed care to young people. Youth under their care often report that the rapport they have developed with their clinicians helps keep them stable and provides much needed support during their incarceration. Vacancies for mental health staff at Victor Cullen should be filled with equally experienced professionals, and the Department should focus on the recruitment and retention of highly qualified mental health clinicians for all DJS facility sites.

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 reporting period, several students at Cullen were studying to take the GED test and two students achieved their high school diploma and attended special graduation services held in their honor. Several Black History events for students were held in honor of Black History Month; there was a family engagement brunch involving fun math game activities that youth and parents could participate in together; and a color run (an activity involving colored powder and movement) that was tied into a nutrition lesson was also organized.

The school had vacancies for instructors in Career and Technical Education (CTE), math, and for a special education and resource professional during the first quarter.

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

The Garrett Children's Center (GCC/Garrett), located in rural Garrett County, 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.

Garrett was fully operational for approximately 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. Some staff continue to report to the site, including teachers who provide online courses used to mitigate vacancies for certified teachers in core content areas at other DJS placement and detention facilities around the state.

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 76% of total youth entries to the youth centers during the first quarter of 2024, a decrease compared to 83% of entries during the same period in 2023. Hispanic/Latino youth represented 13% of entries to the youth centers during the current reporting period compared to 7% in during the first quarter of 2023.

Combined Youth Centers (x2) – Selected Incident Categories	Q1 2022	Q1 2023	Q1 2024
Average Daily Population (ADP)	28	51	49
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	9	21	46
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	3	6	1
3. Physical Restraint	34	91	109
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	3	13	12
5. Seclusion	0	1	1
6. Contraband	2	4	3
7. Suicide Ideation	9	7	19
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	0	0	0

The average daily population at the youth centers decreased slightly (by 4%) when comparing the first quarter of 2024 to the first quarter of 2023. Continuing the comparison between the two time periods:

- The number of incidents involving youth fights and assaults and instances of suicide ideation more than doubled.

- The number of incidents during which staff physically restrained youth increased by 20%.
- Incidents of staff use of mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) on young people inside the youth center facilities decreased slightly.

The majority of incidents involving youth fights and assaults (35), physical restraints of youth by staff (72), and suicide ideation (18) occurred at Green Ridge Youth Center. Most direct-care staff at Green Ridge have two or less years of experience and many have struggled to form constructive relationships with youth as the DJS training program is heavily focused on crisis intervention techniques such as utilizing restraints rather than fostering skills to build rapport with young people. Power struggles between staff and youth are common, and youth are consistently ejected from the program at Green Ridge because the facility is unable to meet their needs.

Physical plant challenges also contribute to an increased risk of incidents at Green Ridge. Unlike Backbone youth center, Green Ridge lacks a dayroom for youth use and the open dorm room lacks section dividers which can aid in separating groups of youth from each other.

Recruitment and retention of highly qualified and culturally competent mental health professionals is an ongoing issue at DJS placement centers. Green Ridge lacks qualified graduate level mental health clinicians to provide mental health services to youth. The facility has two associate degree level substance abuse counselors (CSC-AD) on-site, and the DJS mental health director has approved the counselors to provide individual and family counseling to young people. The Maryland Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists requires that CSC-AD professionals work under close supervision, and the Department could not provide JJMU with supervision logs or documentation to demonstrate that close supervision requirements were being met. Green Ridge has three vacancies for graduate level clinicians. Backbone Mountain Youth Center also has three vacancies for mental health clinicians. Both facilities lack a full-time on-site behavioral health supervisor, and the DJS Director of Behavioral Health is currently serving in this capacity in addition to leading the Department's behavioral health department. The Department should focus on recruitment and retention of highly qualified mental health clinicians at all their placement sites.

Constructive Activities

Youth consistently request more opportunities for structured programming both on- and off-site. In response, Green Ridge has created a team to develop more varied and creative recreational and enrichment programming for young people. Activities are slowly increasing at both youth centers and include off-ground outings and educational field trips conducted in conjunction with the Juvenile Services Education Program (JSEP).

Education

The school at the youth centers 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.

High school graduates who have lengths of stay that coincide with the college semester can take in-person courses at Garrett County Community College.

School personnel organized educational field trips, guest speakers, and a college and career fair at Green Ridge youth center during the first quarter of 2024. They also hosted a family engagement event consisting of a book fair and painting activity.

Young people frequently voice the need for more practical experiences and educational opportunities that will prepare them for careers in their community. The Department should prioritize initiatives, such as dedicated CTE space, that will allow youth to pursue trades and certifications in high demand fields. Plans for a Career and Technical Education (CTE) building on the grounds of Green Ridge have been held up for months because of issues with permitting.

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 youth safety in the program, staff supervision issues, 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 halted.

SMALLER FACILITY UPDATES

SMALLER FACILITY UPDATES

Morning Star Youth Academy

Morning Star Youth Academy is a staff secure (not locked or fenced) committed placement center on Maryland's eastern shore. The facility is operated by VisionQuest, Inc., and can accept up to eight DJS youth for residential services. Morning Star also operates an alternative day school on-grounds for Dorchester County students. The residential program and the day student program are separated.

Morning Star utilizes the trauma-informed Sanctuary model for youth in residence. In addition, staff and residential youth participate in weekly meetings to evaluate youth progress through the elements of the program. For youth in treatment, therapeutic services are provided onsite and supplemented by clinicians from community mental health organizations. An on-grounds therapeutic equestrian program provides another treatment element outlet for youth staying at Morning Star. The young people at the facility through DJS also participate in on- and off-site recreational activities and volunteer in the surrounding community, including helping children with their schoolwork and packing meals for a local charitable organization. Some residential youth work at local businesses.

Weekend downtime remains a concern and youth report spending much of their time sitting on the living unit and playing basketball. The on-site swimming pool which provided youth with a recreational outlet during the summer needs extensive repairs and will not be in operation for the foreseeable future. A greater variety of activities should be offered on weekends and input from residential youth should guide programming options.

Youth staying at Morning Star are allotted three 10-minute phone calls to their families each week. The families of most youth in residence do not live near Morning Star, and young people at the facility frequently request more phone calls home and also want access to virtual calls so as to be able see their family members. Morning Star should make family engagement more of a priority and provide youth with more phone calls home and with access to video calls.

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 therapeutic, education, employment, and enrichment opportunities for youth while they reside in a home-like environment. Students are enrolled in local schools to work toward achieving a high school diploma. Due to the nature of the program, One Love is best suited for older youth who are preparing for independent living.

**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF
JUVENILE SERVICES - RESPONSE**



**DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE SERVICES
RESPONSE TO JJMU 2024 FIRST QUARTER REPORT**

DJS appreciates the opportunity to respond to the feedback shared in JJMU's First Quarter FY '24 Report ("the Report").

The Department of Juvenile Services ("DJS" or "the Department") acknowledges the continued need for improvement raised in the Report and is working to address issues identified by the JJMU and more broadly.

Rather than a point-by-point response and consistent with our recent practice DJS is providing general comments including an update on DJS' work to improve conditions in its residential facilities.

Update on DJS efforts to improve conditions and programming:

As indicated in its previous response, DJS' facility reform strategy is to implement innovation teams focused on transforming programming and conditions in its residential programs. DJS launched its facility innovation teams in the Fourth Quarter of 2023. This strategy is based on two key principles:

- Staff and youth are deserving of working and living in an environment that acknowledges and recognizes their full humanity; and
- As the agency works to shift capacity and resources from expensive and often ineffective residential services to community-services, supports and opportunities, the effort requires a both/and approach, where resources are deployed to develop a robust residential strategy that

works to stop the revolving door to entry, reimagines the work of residential staff, and innovates vibrant and strong community ties.

DJS' approach centers the experiences, perspectives and wisdom of the people most impacted by the change - the young people and DJS staff. As Governor Wes Moore has stated "we believe that the people closest to the problems are closest to the solutions."

The strategy will unfold as the Department's innovation teams execute a co-design framework. The effort will involve operationalizing several of our core values/anchors: social, political, and historical education; cultural healing; restorative justice; and racial justice and equity.

The Innovation Team effort will facilitate transformation, to start, in three facilities: the Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center (BCJJC), the Western Maryland Children's Center (WMCC), and the Victor Cullen Center (VCC). To manage this endeavor DJS is proceeding with a multilayered organizational structure to help achieve both inclusion and accountability. The Lead Innovation Team will function as an Advisory Board, helping to inform, influence, and champion creativity throughout the change process; while the three facility-based Innovation Teams will be working to develop and implement strategies at the facility level.

The Lead Innovation Team kicked off on March 7, 2024, and the initial activities and progress of the Innovation Team effort was described in DJS' response to JJMU's 4th Quarter 2023 report. Since that time, the Innovation Team effort has included the following:

The Innovation Team has been working to establish its facility-based teams, consistent with the plan to launch the work in three facilities this calendar year: BCJJC, WMCC, and VCC. DJS prioritized BCJJC and WMCC for Q1 activity, while ensuring added resources are in place to support implementation at VCC in Q2.

Given its size and the number of staff and young people impacted by its operation, BCJJC was identified as DJS' top priority and therefore kicked off first. Second, as a result of the decision to maintain an all-girls population at WMCC, DJS' Innovation Team acknowledged the need to support collaboration, engagement and creativity among the staff and young people at that facility. We are in agreement around the urgency to develop robust and relevant programming and services, along with revamping the operational model to meet gender specific needs. The agency's move to procure and obtain immediate staffing resources to advance the Innovation Team's work at WMCC

demonstrates its commitment to, and awareness of, ensuring a time-sensitive strategy.

Obtaining resources to support implementation at WMCC is freeing up resources and allowing the Innovation Team to launch efforts at VCC in the near term. DJS will capitalize on the fact that there is a young person from BCJJC's Innovation Team now at VCC who can assist with the team's efforts there; additionally, the Innovation Team will utilize the two VCC staff members that just participated in the Missouri site visit (more details on this are shared below) to help with building and launching the VCC team.

As shared previously, DJS' approach centers the voices and perspectives of staff and young people; therefore, the Innovation Team composition in each facility comprises a cross section of staff roles, including: facility leadership; middle management; front-line staff; youth; JSEP; behavioral health; maintenance; case management; and community case management. The Innovation team implemented an open application process for young people to join, where the only criteria is to have spent at least a cumulative 30 days (past and/or present) in a DJS residential facility.

Facility-based updates:

BCJJC

- Innovation Team launched in **April**
- The Innovation Team conducted seven focus groups for staff and eight for young people in **June**; in addition to analyzing the feedback from the focus groups, the team is preparing to share its findings from two qualitative surveys (one each for staff and youth) that was created with input from the Innovation Team and administered during the focus group process; there were 55 completed surveys from staff and 65 from youth
- An event was thrown on **June 21st** to recognize and thank all staff and young people for participation in the focus groups. This time was used to both honor and acknowledge their collective contributions, and also continued to reiterate the Innovation Team's goals
- The BCJJC Innovation Team currently includes 4 young people

WMCC

- Innovation Team launched in **June**
- Staff and youth focus groups are being conducted in **July**

- There are currently 5 young people on the WMCC Innovation Team

VCC

- Innovation Team is launching in **July**
- Staff and youth focus groups are being conducted in July
- The Innovation Team will be actively recruiting youth members in **July** to join its veteran member (from BCJJC)

Analysis and results from the focus group process will be critical in informing implementation plans.

Another key activity, that will help support and accelerate transformation, was the agency's investment in organizing a *Learning Journey* to Missouri's Division of Youth Services (DYS). Missouri DHS is widely acclaimed to have the most well-run residential facilities across a state for youth in the juvenile justice system. In fact, Maryland elected and other state officials visited Missouri in 2003 to explore how to replicate Missouri's approach in Maryland and continued to express interest in changes modeled on Missouri as recently as 2011, but the efforts never gained traction.

The Maryland DHS delegation that visited Missouri in **July 2024** included representatives from the three initial Innovation Team facilities, with emphasis on leadership, middle management, and line staff. The Innovation Team also prioritized the inclusion of two young people who used to be in the care and custody of the agency and now hold positions as Youth Voice Specialists.

The delegation spent three days visiting five unique programs throughout the western region of the state. During this experience leaders and staff who are (and will be) a part of supporting and sustaining change in their respective facilities had the opportunity to see a system that values and operationalizes a human-centered, therapeutic approach to residential care. During the upcoming months the Innovation Team will be leveraging this experience and building a community of practice among the delegation; of which, the goals will be to: establish action plans (short and long-term) based on learnings from Missouri's system; share energy, ideas, and lessons learned; and inspire and hold each other accountable.

Since JJMU focused to some degree in its report this Quarter on mental health services, DHS is providing an update on its efforts in this area.

During this review period, the DJS behavioral health team held a series of workgroups to focus on the core areas of behavioral health treatment, contracting, staffing and programming.

DJS' behavioral health team provides access to licensed clinicians at each of its residential facilities.

The services offered at DJS' detention facilities are psycho-educational groups, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and motivational interviewing family engagement in partnership with the facility and school, substance use disorder education groups, individual and family interventions as needed, psychiatry, medication management and various assessments and evaluations to inform the courts, at the court's request. These services are being delivered on site by Hope Health, a contracted provider.

The services offered at DJS' treatment facilities include all of the services listed above in addition to regular individual and family sessions, treatment related to trauma as recommended by assessments, and programs and services that have been identified as needed based on a risk assessment which informs the individual treatment plan in DJS' Comprehensive Treatment Model (CTM). CTM integrates principles and practices from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), Positive Youth Development (PYD), and Trauma Informed Care (TIC). DJS has been facing staffing deficits in the western Maryland region which has created some challenges in treatment service delivery. DJS remains focused on addressing those issues as quickly as possible (and have more details on this approach below).

Updates to treatment programs:

- As JJMU noted, DJS has pending placement units (PPU) in two of its detention facilities. These units are staffed with DJS clinicians to deliver treatment hours that are similar to the treatment post-adjudicated/committed youth would have access to in a treatment program. This introduction to treatment helps the youth gain knowledge of the treatment program structure, prepares them for treatment programs and begins their earning of treatment hours in several domains as identified by their initial assessment. This is a critical part of our efforts to reduce the time waiting for treatment to commence (often referred to as “dead time” by young people), shortening overall lengths of stay.

- To address the deficit in treatment programs for girls (which is a problem across the country), DJS created the Peace Academy at the WMCC. This 6-bed unit is fully staffed with clinicians that provide 100% of the CTM program for girls at the facility.
- DJS has seen a steady increase in admissions for girls across all legal designations and is in the process of increasing its clinical programs to add trauma-informed treatment to all girls admitted to our facilities.
- DJS has also created The Bridge Program, designed to continue access to behavioral health treatment for youth being discharged from our treatment program when community access to treatment is not readily available. This program is a maximum of 90 days, 100% remote and staffed for approximately 10-12 youth. This program also extends to the provision of psychiatric services through DJS' current University of Maryland School of Medicine provider

Contracting:

DJS has contracts to provide behavioral health treatment in facilities, assessments and evaluations in DJS and other detention facilities, as well as communities. These contracts provide a significant number of evaluations required by the courts. During this review period, DJS has reviewed each contract with an intentional focus on the following:

- Contract deliverables are being met
- The evaluations are high quality and culturally responsive
- All contractors offer some ability to do the evaluation in-person, based on the unique needs of the youth

Staffing:

Due to long standing staffing deficits in the Western Maryland region, behavioral health leadership has instituted the following interventions:

- Hired a clinically licensed regional supervisor to both provide clinical services and supervise behavioral health services staff at both Backbone Mountain Youth Center and Green Ridge Youth Center

- Clinical supervision is being provided by a Board Approved Clinical Supervisor to certified supervised behavioral health clinicians
- Assistance with administrative supervision at Green Ridge Youth Center is being provided by the Psychology Manager until such time that there are more clinical staff hired and on site at both youth centers
- Created and implemented a call-down procedure so that youth in crisis for suicide assessment or PREA allegation response can be seen by a licensed clinician consistent with the current policies and procedures required time frames.
- DJS continues to utilize the current emergency on-call schedule encompassing all youth center behavioral health staff, the regional supervisor and other clinically licensed staff as backups for after hours, evenings, weekends and holiday behavioral health coverage.
- DBT coordinator is providing DBT groups to assist in service delivery at Green Ridge Youth Center.
- Contracted with an agency that will be providing additional clinicians at WMCC, VCC, Backbone Mountain Youth Center and Green Ridge Youth Center. To date, they have provided 3 clinicians with a plan of up to 9 additional, based on need.

Programming:

The Comprehensive Treatment Model (CTM) was introduced by DJS in July 2022 with full integration in July of 2023. As stated above, the CTM integrates principles and practices from CBT, DBT, PYD, and Trauma Informed Care. During this year, the behavioral health team has instituted continuous quality improvement (CQI) and met with various internal and external stakeholders to identify the strengths and areas for improvement of the CTM. The team held its final meeting in July 2024 to review and approve updates to the CTM program. Those suggested updates will be presented to various internal and external stakeholders for feedback before being confirmed, distributed, and updating the website and digital/print materials.

DJS is also pleased to share the following incident and population related data, collected by DJS' Office of Research and Evaluation. Note that DJS believes

critical incident rates will improve over time as the work of the agency’s Facility Innovation Teams progresses.

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.

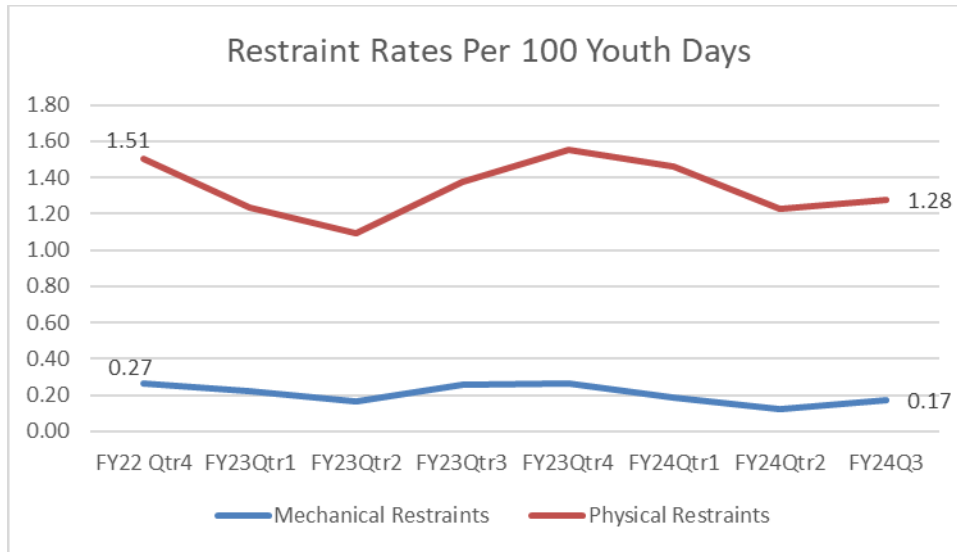
While it is important to look at trends over longer times, DJS populations and programming often change considerably so it may be more meaningful to compare the current quarter to the one just prior in order to allow for a more direct comparison. Populations are more comparable when looking back one quarter than they would be when looking back two years. For this reason, both are presented below.

Key Incident Counts and Rates for the Past Two Quarters at DJS Programs

Incident Count	Mechanical Restraints		Physical Restraints		Seclusions		Youth Fights		Yth on Yth Assaults	
	FY24Qtr2	FY24Q3	FY24Qtr2	FY24Q3	FY24Qtr2	FY24Q3	FY24Qtr2	FY24Q3	FY24Qtr2	FY24Q3
Detention										
Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Ctr Detention	1	6	37	49	1	3	13	12	68	66
<i>Rate Per 100 Youth Days</i>	0.01	0.07	0.43	0.55	0.01	0.03	0.15	0.14	0.78	0.75
Charles Hickey School	2	18	42	80	7	19	3	0	35	38
<i>Rate Per 100 Youth Days</i>	0.03	0.29	0.66	1.29	0.11	0.31	0.05	0.00	0.55	0.62
Cheltenham Youth Detention Center	7	5	81	76	32	32	27	21	37	45
<i>Rate Per 100 Youth Days</i>	0.11	0.08	1.30	1.23	0.51	0.52	0.43	0.34	0.59	0.73
Lower Eastern Shore Children's Center	4	0	39	25	4	0	2	4	22	6
<i>Rate Per 100 Youth Days</i>	0.22	0.00	2.13	1.54	0.22	0.00	0.11	0.25	1.20	0.37
Western Maryland Children's Center	8	10	42	49	1	3	12	8	6	7
<i>Rate Per 100 Youth Days</i>	0.50	0.57	2.64	2.82	0.06	0.17	0.75	0.46	0.38	0.40
Total Detention Incident Count	22	39	241	279	45	57	57	45	168	162
<i>Detention Rate Per 100 Youth Days</i>	0.09	0.16	0.98	1.14	0.18	0.23	0.23	0.18	0.68	0.66
Committed Programs										
Backbone Mountain Youth Center	3	9	24	37	N/A	N/A	9	4	4	7
<i>Rate Per 100 Youth Days</i>	0.13	0.39	1.06	1.61	N/A	N/A	0.40	0.17	0.18	0.31
Green Ridge Youth Center	10	3	107	72	N/A	N/A	10	12	14	23
<i>Rate Per 100 Youth Days</i>	0.41	0.14	4.42	3.26	N/A	N/A	0.41	0.54	0.58	1.04
Victor Cullen Center	4	4	13	13	0	2	1	4	3	7
<i>Rate Per 100 Youth Days</i>	0.21	0.17	0.67	0.55	0.00	0.08	0.05	0.17	0.15	0.29
Total Committed Incident Count	17	16	144	122	0	2	20	20	21	37
<i>Committed Rate Per 100 Youth Days</i>	0.26	0.23	2.17	1.77	0.00	0.03	0.30	0.29	0.32	0.54
Total (Detention & Committed)										
Total Incident Count	39	55	385	401	45	59	77	65	189	199
<i>Rate Per 100 Youth Days</i>	0.12	0.17	1.23	1.28	0.14	0.19	0.25	0.21	0.60	0.63

Data and Trends by Quarter

Restraints



Looking over the longer term of two years:

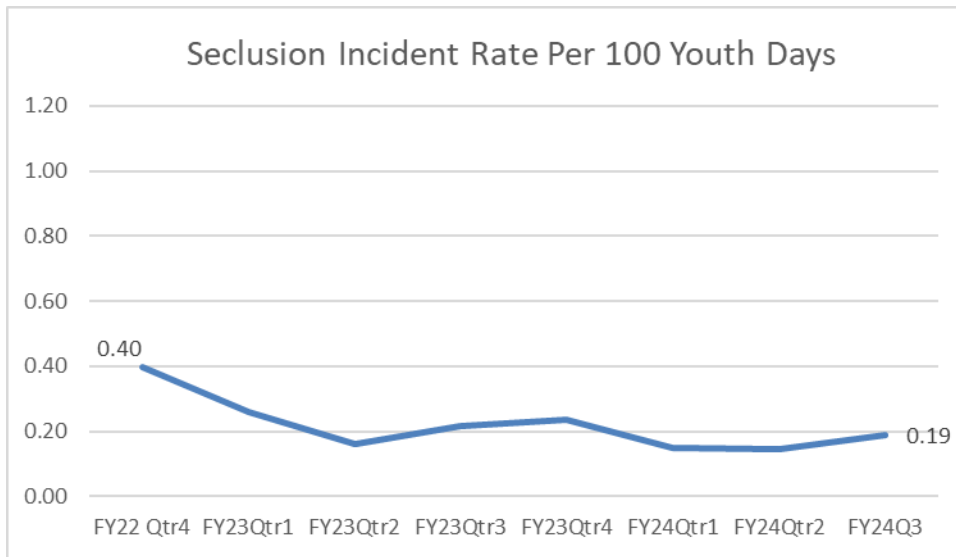
- Mechanical restraints remain consistently less common than physical restraints and the rates have varied very little over this time period showing an overall decrease.
- Rates for physical restraints have fluctuated more and saw an overall decrease.

Over the last two quarters:

- Mechanical Restraints
 - Statewide overall rates increased
 - Rates have increased in detention centers with the exception of decreases at Cheltenham and Lower Eastern Shore.
 - Rates have decreased in committed treatment programs with the exception of an increase at Backbone Mountain.

- Physical Restraints
 - Statewide overall rates increased
 - Rates have increased overall in detention with the exception of decreases at Cheltenham and Lower Eastern Shore.
 - Rates have decreased overall in committed treatment programs with the exception of an increase at Backbone Mountain.

Seclusions

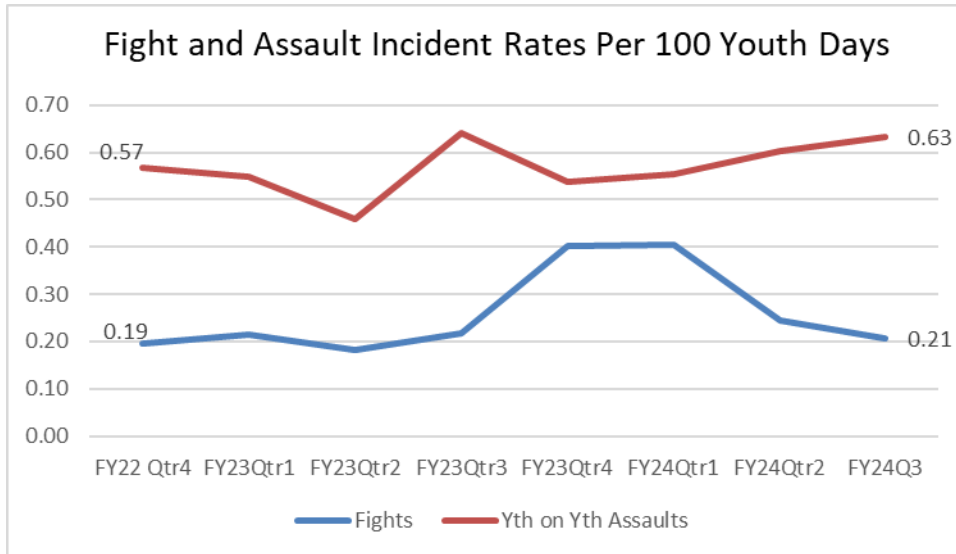


The use of seclusion is uncommon overall and has been relatively flat over the past two years with a slight uptick between the last two quarters. Fluctuations in rates over time are mostly attributable to detention facilities.

In the last two quarters, however, it should be noted that each detention facility saw an increase in incident rates for seclusion with the exception of Lower Eastern Shore which decreased from 0.22 to 0.0.

Also important to note is that while all committed treatment facilities reported zero incidents of seclusion in the previous quarter, VCC reported a rate of 0.08 in the third quarter of FY 2024 which represented 2 seclusion incidents.

Fights and Youth on Youth Assaults:



Looking by quarter over the two-year period for statewide (detention and treatment programs):

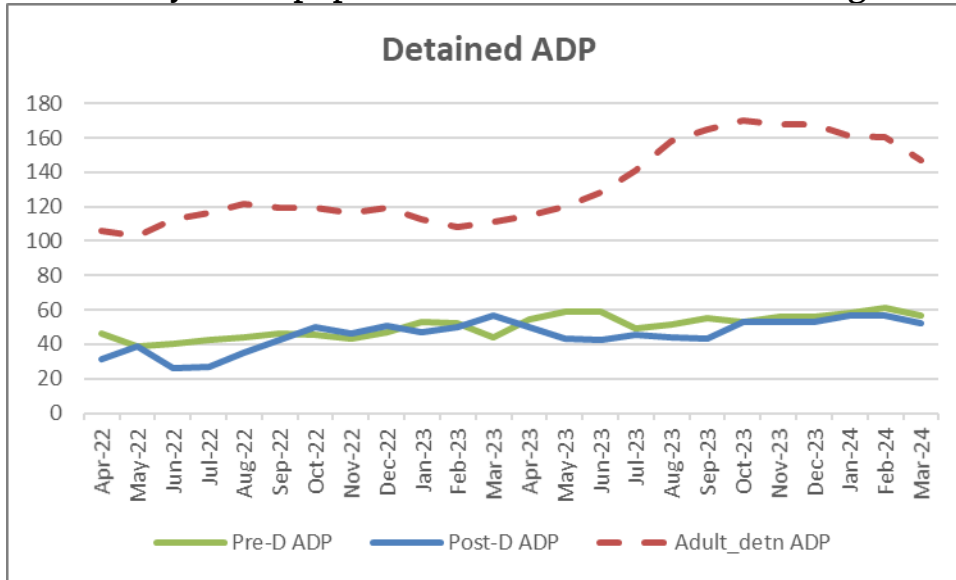
- The rate of fight incidents remains consistently lower than the rate of assault incidents.
- Overall increases were seen in incident rates of both fights and assaults.

Over the last two quarters:

- Fights
 - Statewide overall rates decreased
 - Rates have decreased overall in detention and treatment programs.
 - Rates per 100 youth days increased at Lower Eastern Shore, Green Ridge, and Victor Cullen Center.
- Youth on Youth Assaults
 - Statewide overall rates increased
 - Rates have decreased overall in detention
 - Exceptions to the overall increase in rates in detention facilities are decreases at Hickey, Cheltenham, and WMCC.
 - Rates increased overall in treatment programs and that increase was seen in each facility.

Population Data

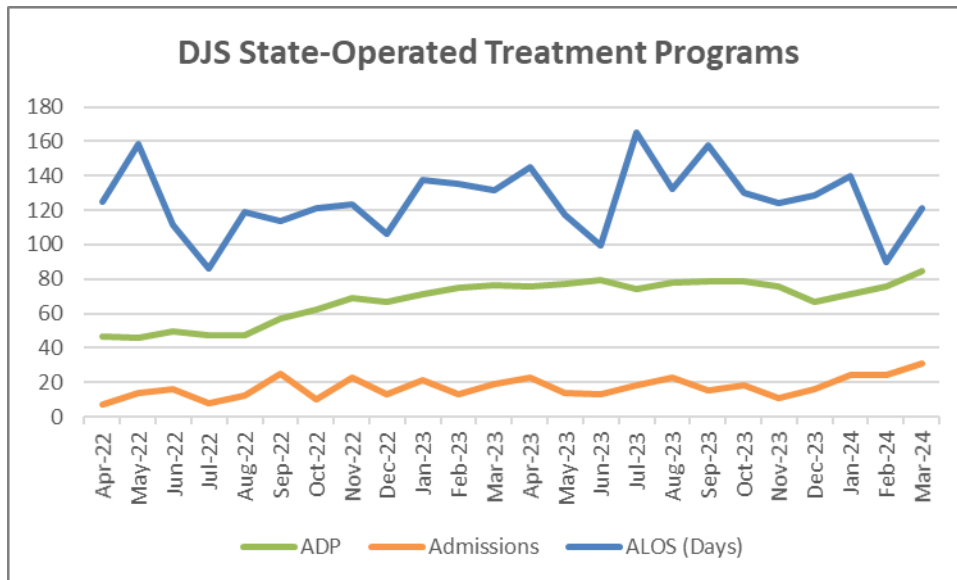
A summary of the population data shows the following:



By examining the last two years of data, it is evident that the rise in the overall detention average daily population (ADP) is being heavily impacted by the steep increase in the adult hold ADP. Post-D and Pre-D ADP have also both increased overall but not as sharply.

Between April 2022 and March 2024:

- ADP for the adult population increased 65.8%
- Post-D ADP increased 38.8% and Pre-Disposition ADP increased 24.2%.



ALOS has decreased overall during the two year period but saw an increase over the last two months. Admissions and ADP have both seen an overall increase since April 2022.

- ALOS has decreased overall during the two year period though it did vary during this span. It was near its 2-year low in February 2024 before increasing in March 2024.
- Admissions have seen an overall increase since its low in April 2022 and a similar uptick during the last two months.
- ADP has increased over the two-year span reaching its highest point in March 2024.

The Department will further review JJMU’s 2024 1st Quarter report to integrate into DJS’ work plans.

Please accept this as the Department’s response to your First Quarter monitoring report and do not hesitate to contact Marc Schindler, Assistant Secretary & Chief of Staff, if you have any questions.

JUVENILE SERVICES EDUCATION PROGRAM – RESPONSE

Juvenile Services Education Program Response

Response to JJMU 2024 First Quarter

Mental Health

In JSEP's ongoing effort to address the mental health needs of our students, particularly in terms of barriers to accessing education, JSEP created school social work positions to help mitigate the negative effects of crises experienced by students while in school as well as ensure student well-being. These social workers are itinerant, with one covering schools in the east and the other covering schools in the western part of the state. The social worker for the eastern part of the state started with JSEP this past month, and the one for the western part is under contract and expected to be onboard in early August.

In addition to the school social workers, there are three school psychologist positions (one currently vacant). The school psychologists work with students across the state to provide educational testing, related special education services, and mental health counseling during the school day. Every JSEP school also has one to two school counselors available all day to help students deal with any immediate or ongoing crises.

The distribution of the itinerant mental health personnel is as follows:

- BMYC: school psychologist (vacant)
- VCC: social worker (starting August 7, 2024)
- CHHS: social worker
- BCJJC: school psychologist
- CYDC: school psychologist

WMCC will be served by both the school psychologist in the west and the school social worker at VCC, but currently does not have the space to house a mental health professional, aside from the school counselor.

Family Engagement

JSEP's ongoing commitment to family engagement expanded this past quarter to include a welcome packet mailed to every parent once their child has been in a JSEP school for five days. The welcome packet includes FERPA forms, Home Language Surveys, a letter from the principal with contact information, the current Student Handbook, and a login and password for PowerSchool so parents can see their child's assignments and grades in real time. JSEP continues with regular parent engagement events at every school, as well as invitations to graduations, student achievement ceremonies, and parent-teacher conferences. The parent

engagement activities have included resource fairs, apprenticeship workshops, book fairs and literacy events. All school principals are encouraged to plan their parent events well in advance to give the superintendent time to arrange transportation for any parent who would like to attend.

Vacancies

School vacancies, particularly for teachers, continue to be a challenge in education. JSEP meets with the DJS HR department weekly to find ways to increase the number of quality applicants for their schools. Principals attended the Spring State Hiring Fair, Maryland State Hiring Fair, and The Frederick News Post job fair along with DJS' Human Resource staff. JSEP is hopeful that the planned influx of new employees slated for July will help mitigate this problem.

GED

The JSEP GED numbers for FY24, which just ended, were up 64% over the previous year, with students earning 41 GEDs. JSEP continues to allow students to self-select for inclusion in the GED process. The JSEP procedure has proven successful for students who wish to complete their GED, while also allowing those who decide the program is not for them to continue on to graduate from high school in the more traditional manner. Twenty-six JSEP students' earned their high school diploma from their LEAs while they were enrolled in a JSEP school this past year. Several of these students initially intended to earn a GED but changed their minds after taking one or two sections of the exam.

Afterschool Clubs

After school clubs were very popular with students and staff but needed to be suspended while an issue with facilitator stipends needed to be clarified. This process will hopefully be resolved soon, and clubs will resume.

Instructional Practice

The principals are the instructional leaders of the schools and are proactive in addressing the challenges where we are teaching students by units rather than by grade. In his classes, students are seated by course, and teachers instruct in a small group format. Most classrooms have two teachers, one highly qualified content specialist and a certified special education teacher. Small group instruction with co-teaching is effective because the teachers plan together to increase consistency and coherence of delivery of the curriculum and improves student outcomes. This model is similar to what one would see in many high school classes in any LEA implementing small group instruction.