

**Audit of Residential Commitment Programs
Behavior Management Systems
Report Number: A-1415DJJ-018
August 18, 2015**

By

**The Office of the Inspector General
Bureau of Internal Audit**

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**STATE OF FLORIDA
DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE**

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 18, 2015
TO: Christina K. Daly, Secretary
FROM: Robert A. Munson, Inspector General 
SUBJECT: Final Report - Audit No. A-1415DJJ-018, Audit of Residential Commitment Programs Behavior Management Systems

Attached is our final report, *Audit of Residential Commitment Programs Behavior Management Systems*. There are no adverse reportable conditions; therefore, the Bureau of Internal Audit has determined that no follow-up to the audit is required.

We would like to thank the Office of Residential Services and private contract providers for the assistance extended to our staff during the audit process. Please feel free to contact Michael Yu, Audit Director, at 850-717-2468, if you have any questions.

RM/rb

Attachment

Cc: Fred Schuknecht, Chief of Staff
Laura Moneyham, Assistant Secretary, Office of Residential Services
Melinda M. Miguel, Chief Inspector General, Executive Office of the Governor
Sherrill F. Norman, CPA, Auditor General
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Rick Scott, Governor

Christina K. Daly Secretary

The mission of the Department of Juvenile Justice is to increase public safety by reducing juvenile delinquency through effective prevention, intervention, and treatment services that strengthen families and turn around the lives of troubled youth.

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**Office of Inspector General
Bureau of Internal Audit
Audit No. A-141514DJJ-018
Audit of Residential Commitment Programs Behavior Management Systems**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of Juvenile Justice (Department), Office of the Inspector General, Bureau of Internal Audit has performed a statewide audit of the Residential Commitment Programs Behavior Management Systems (BMS). The objectives of this audit were to provide management with reasonable assurances that the design of the BMS complies with Department policies and procedures; and internal controls are in place to ensure the effectiveness of the BMS. The audit scope was from July 1, 2013 through May 30, 2015, and related activities through the end of fieldwork.

During the audit process, we selected one program from each of the nine private providers contracted with the Department, out of 72 residential commitment programs in the state of Florida. Each program visited exhibited the following attributes:

- order and security;
- safety, respect, fairness, and protection of rights within the community;
- constructive discipline and a system of positive and negative consequences;
- opportunities for recognition of accomplishments and positive behavior;
- a means for peaceful conflict resolution;
- minimal separation of youth from the general population;
- youth's basic rights or services were met; and
- consistent implementation through training and oversight of direct care staff.

In general, our audit indicated that the residential commitment programs visited had developed and implemented a written BMS that complies with Florida Administrative Code 63E-7.009 and Department policies and procedures. In addition, our review indicated programs had sufficient internal controls in place to ensure the effectiveness of their BMS.

It should be noted that the result of the audit is based on limited review of documents, limited interviews of facility staff and youth, and limited inspection of operations and activities at the visited facilities. Conclusions were drawn based on written documents reviewed, conditions observed at the facilities, and information provided by facility staff and youth at the time the auditors were on site. This audit report should not be used to relieve the Department from future monitoring of the Behavior Management System. Continuous monitoring of the BMS in residential facilities is pivotal to the program's success.

Audit of Residential Commitment Programs Behavior Management Systems Audit # A-1415DJJ-018

INTRODUCTION

The Office of the Inspector General, Bureau of Internal Audit conducted an audit of the Residential Commitment Programs Behavior Management Systems (BMS), which included the BMS design and implementation in residential programs from July 1, 2013 through May 30, 2015, and related activities through the end of fieldwork. The audit was initiated based on our Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Audit Plan and conducted in accordance with the *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing*, published by the Institute of Internal Auditors.

Background

The Office of Residential Services oversees the Department of Juvenile Justice (Department) development and management of residential facilities and programs. Behavior Management Systems are designed to promote the development of youth self-control, teach and encourage positive behavior, and promote public safety. Private providers under contract with the Department operate all residential commitment programs in the State of Florida. The Bureau of Monitoring and Quality Improvement monitors and evaluates each program annually.

There are currently seventy-two (72) residential commitment programs operated by nine private providers contracted with the Department. In Florida, a youth may be sent by a juvenile court judge to a residential commitment program for a violation of law. This is not the same as a conviction or imprisonment. The Florida juvenile justice system is designed to rehabilitate offenders through supervision, counseling, and treatment.

Consistent with Florida Statute, Section 985, residential commitment programs are grouped into the following four custody classifications: minimum risk, non-secure, high risk, and maximum risk, based on the assessed risk to public safety. The restrictiveness levels of "commitment" or placement represent increasing restrictions on a youth's movement and freedom. Residential facilities range from non-secure to maximum-risk facilities.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

The objectives of this audit were to provide management with reasonable assurances that the design of the residential commitment programs' Behavior Management Systems complied with Department policies and procedures; and internal controls are in place to ensure the effectiveness of BMS. The scope of the audit included the BMS design and

implementation in residential programs from July 1, 2013 through May 30, 2015, and related activities through the end of fieldwork.

To achieve the audit objectives we:

- reviewed applicable Florida statutes and rules;
- reviewed Department policies and procedures;
- reviewed prior behavior management system audit;
- reviewed selected residential program's written behavior management system;
- reviewed Central Communications Center reports;
- reviewed Bureau of Monitoring and Quality Improvement Program Reports;
- reviewed youth records, staff training files and curriculum, staff position descriptions, and staff evaluations;
- reviewed grievances filed by youth;
- toured residential commitment facilities,
- interviewed program management, staff, and youth; and
- conducted other activities deemed necessary.

We visited and conducted audit procedures for the following programs:

- Alachua Academy, a non-secure female program in Gainesville provided by North American Family Institute;
- Brevard Group Treatment Home, a non-secure male program in Cocoa provided by Aspire Health Partners;
- Challenge Juvenile Residential Facility, a non-secure male program in Brooksville provided by Eckerd Youth Alternatives;
- DOVE Academy, a non-secure female program in Graceville provided by Twin Oaks Juvenile Development;
- Escambia Boys Base, a non-secure male program in Pensacola provided by AMIKids;
- Kissimmee Juvenile Correctional Facility, a high-risk male program in Kissimmee provided by Sequel TSI of Florida;
- Marion Youth Academy, a non-secure male program in Ocala provided by Youth Services International;
- Martin Girls Academy, a high/maximum-risk female program in Stuart provided by G4S Youth Services; and
- Walton Youth Development and Treatment Center, a high-risk male program in DeFuniak Springs provided by Gulf Coast Youth Services.

We used judgmental sampling to improve the overall efficiency of the audit. Errors or irregularities could have occurred, but not detected, because of inherent limitations associated with judgmental sampling. As such, projection of the auditors' conclusions

based on our sampling method may be different from that reached if all residential commitment programs were subject to the audit procedures applied during the audit process.

RESULTS OF AUDIT

Behavior Management Systems Design and Implementation

According to Florida Administrative Code 63E-7.009, a residential commitment program shall establish a BMS that is responsive to the unique characteristics of the program's population, foster accountability for behavior and compliance with the residential community's rules and expectations, and shall be described in writing and designed to:

- maintain order and security;
- promote safety, respect, fairness, and protection of rights within the residential community;
- provide constructive discipline and a system of positive and negative logical consequences to encourage youth to meet expectations for behavior;
- provide opportunities for positive reinforcement and recognition for accomplishments and positive behaviors;
- promote socially acceptable means for youth to meet their needs;
- promote dialogue and peaceful conflict resolution;
- minimize separation of youth from the general population; and
- assure consistent implementation and treatment through training and oversight of direct-care staff.

Our review of programs' written BMS indicated that all nine programs visited designed their BMS to meet the above requirements. The BMS was outlined in the staff guide and youth handbook for all programs reviewed. The youth handbooks explained in detail the criteria for earning points, the level system, defining targeted behaviors, and listing behaviors not tolerated. Staff guides explained character expectations for youth, point cards, program's values and beliefs, special treatment teams, behavioral consequences, safety, level freeze, level advancement, incentives, and group meetings. The written BMS described that its purpose is to promote safety, security, respect, and fairness while protecting the rights of each youth. It also provides opportunities for positive reinforcement and recognition of accomplishments and positive behaviors.

During our visits, we observed signed youth orientation checklists and signed youth handbooks, which demonstrated the BMS was explained during the first phase of the program. A point system was used to gain privileges. The point system was also used to provide ongoing feedback to the youth concerning their behavior. Youth earned points by following expectations for daily living. When youth participated in scheduled activities and demonstrate behaviors that are on or above expectations, points were awarded.

The consistent application of points is important for a successful BMS. Staff should not threaten to take away points but encourage youth to earn points. In the programs we visited, the points were recorded on the youth's point card. Points could not be taken away, only earned. Points were then used to purchase items at the point store as a reward for positive behavior. At the end of each shift, staff informed youth of the amount of points earned during that shift. Each youth had the opportunity to earn a predetermined amount of points. In some programs reviewed, daily points, weekly percentages, and the level achieved were displayed prominently for all youth and staff's assessment.

Incentives were built into programming on a daily, weekly, and/or monthly basis. In several programs, youth and staff together develop incentives. Youth remarked they enjoy having input regarding the incentives offered. We obtained examples of daily, weekly, and/or monthly incentives offered to the youth. One program prepared a monthly calendar of incentives for youth and staff's awareness. Youth interviewed felt the incentives offered were worth the effort to achieve.

Each youth must progress through levels as a requirement for graduation. The different levels vary in requirements for completion. Each level came with progressive privileges. Consequences for bad behavior resulted in the loss of ability to earn points, gain privileges and level-up in the program. We reviewed youths' daily point sheets and monthly totals for all youth interviewed during our visits. Youth interviewed were able to explain the point and level system.

Treatment Teams evaluated the youth's progress through each level and determined if youth qualify for level advancement. Treatment team meetings may include the juvenile probation officer, guardian, program administrator, case manager, and behavior analysts. When youth displayed behavior that is considered a program violation, a special treatment team meeting was held to address the behavior. Each youth receiving a special treatment team referral has a clear understanding of the violation and immediate consequences. Consequences were discussed at the youth's special treatment team meeting to determine if changes are needed to their performance plan. Youth's privileges were suspended until youth successfully complete the process the special treatment team has determined appropriate. As a youth progresses through the levels of the program, he/she would be involved in fewer incidents.

The types of group meetings held varied throughout the programs visited but offered ways to resolve conflicts peacefully among the youth and staff. Both youth and staff confirmed participation in these meetings. In addition to meetings, youth who feel their rights have been violated were encouraged to follow the grievance process, which promotes peaceful conflict resolution. We reviewed grievance forms for all programs visited. The grievance forms obtained had documentation of youth and staff's process for resolving conflict. We also obtained "request to speak" forms, which provide youth the opportunity to speak with

a particular staff member. These contained the youth's explanation for making the request, staff's signature, date of conversation, and staff's explanation.

Programs provided opportunities for positive reinforcement and recognition of accomplishments through award ceremonies where youth have the opportunity to receive the following types of awards: Room of the Month, Youth of the Month, Student of the Month, Off-Campus Trip, and Restraint Free Days Party. Youth confirmed they had participated in award ceremonies or knew these awards were available. When we arrived at one program, we observed a Transition Celebration for a youth who was promoting out of the academy. We listened to staff and youth express encouraging words concerning the transitional youth and promoting the youth's ability to succeed outside the program.

No youth interviewed stated they knew of anyone separated from the general population as a form of punishment. Some programs visited used controlled observation rooms for behavior intervention techniques, safety and security issues, fighting, vandalism, and if youth are aggressive with other youth; but staff routinely monitored them. Other programs offered a time out or quiet time if youth needed to calm down but doors remained open or unlocked.

In general, our audit indicated that the residential commitment programs visited had developed and implemented written behavior management systems that comply with Florida Administrative Code 63E-7.009, Department policies and procedures, and contracts with the Department.

Internal Controls and Monitoring

We reviewed position descriptions for staff within the programs visited. Most programs integrated behavior management into staff position descriptions. Descriptions included the following:

- Knowledge of programmatic approaches to behavioral management including the principles of behavior modification;
- In response to episodes of extreme behavior, uses appropriate crisis intervention and behavioral management techniques, which may include the physical restraint and confinement of residents;
- Ability to understand complex concepts of learning and behavior modification and their application to the client population served;
- An understanding of level systems or other behavior management modalities;
- Provides consultation regarding behavior management practices;
- Participates in maintaining the therapeutic milieu on the unit, enforces the level system or other methods of behavior management when not on transport; and

- Ensures that the program's behavior management system is enforced in a consistent and fair manner.

Through the review of staff files and training curriculum, we noted that staff were trained on the BMS upon employment and retrained annually. The BMS was also reiterated in staff meetings. Staff interviewed were knowledgeable in the BMS and appear to understand the BMS concepts of being fair, consistent, and using encouragement instead of discouragement. Some programs visited utilize training received in Motivational Interviewing Techniques.

Staff members such as shift supervisors or behavior management analyst, depending on the program, collected the point cards each night, recorded the data onto a summary sheet, and returned to youth the following morning. Therefore, supervisors reviewed on a daily basis the direct care staff's application of points. Shift supervisors were responsible for overseeing the point process and conducting checks. Point cards were completed in real time and match the current activity.

Direct care staff were given feedback for their application of the BMS through annual evaluations. When interviewed, direct care staff stated that supervisors and program administrators provided daily feedback on their application of the BMS on an as needed basis. Supervisors' ensured staff are competently and effectively supervising youth. Youth surveys also provided feedback to program management that the BMS is properly administered.

The Bureau of Monitoring and Quality Improvement monitors the residential commitment program's Behavior Management Systems on an annual basis. We reviewed program reports for the period of our audit for the nine programs reviewed. These reports were consistent with our findings.

Through the review of staff training files and curriculum, staff position descriptions, staff evaluations, and interviews with youth and staff, the audit indicated that programs had sufficient internal controls in place to ensure the effectiveness of their BMS.

It should be noted that the result of the audit is based on limited review of documents, limited interviews of facility staff and youth, and limited inspection of operations and activities at the visited facilities. Conclusions were drawn based on written documents reviewed, conditions observed at the facilities, and information provided by facility staff and youth at the time the auditors were on site. This audit report should not be used to relieve the Department from future monitoring of the Behavior Management System. Continuous monitoring of the BMS in residential facilities is pivotal to the program's success.

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APPENDIX

Management Response



**STATE OF FLORIDA
DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE**

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 17, 2015
TO: Michael Yu, Auditing Director
FROM: Laura K. Moneyham, Assistant Secretary, Residential Services *LKM*
SUBJECT: Response to Audit Report A-1415DJJ-018

The Office of Residential Services appreciates the time and energy your team put into the completion of the audit of residential commitment programs' Behavior Management Systems.

My leadership team understands the importance of strong, effective youth Behavior Management Systems and will continue to provide oversight and technical assistance to promote sustained positive outcomes.

2737 Centerview Drive • Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3100 • (850) 488-1850

Rick Scott, Governor

Christina K. Daly, Secretary

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