**PREA AUDIT: AUDITOR’S SUMMARY REPORT**

**JUVENILE FACILITIES**

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| **FACILITY INFORMATION** | |
| **Name of Facility:** | **Casa Isla (Volunteers of America of Massachusetts)** |
| **Facility Type:** | **Private Non-Profit Residential Facility (Contract Vendor for MA DYS)** |
| **Date of On-Site Audit:** | **August 21, 2014** |
| **PARENT AGENCY OR GOVERNING AUTHORITY INFORMATION** | |
| **Governing Authority or Parent Agency:** | **Massachusetts Division of Youth Services is the Governing Authority** |
| **Address:** | **Boston, MA** |
| **Agency Chief Executive Officer:** | **Peter Forbes – Commissioner** |
| **Agency Wide PREA Coordinator:** | **Monica King – State Wide PREA Coordinator** |
| **Email:** | [**monica.l.king@state.ma.us**](mailto:monica.l.king@state.ma.us) |
| **AUDITOR INFORMATION** | |
| **Certified Auditor:** | **Kurt Pfisterer – Dual Certified Adult and Juvenile Facilities** |
| **Address:** | **8 Lakeshore Drive** |
|  | **Rensselaer, NY 12144** |
| **Email:** | [**kurtpfisterer@gmail.com**](mailto:kurtpfisterer@gmail.com) |
| **Telephone:** | **518 860 5764** |

**DESCRIPTION OF FACILITY CHARACTERISTICS:** Casa Isla is located on the Long Island Health Campus in Boston Harbor. Casa Isla is a two-story, brick and mortar, 15-bed staff-secure residential treatment and revocation program for adolescent males, ages 13 to 20 years, committed to the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services (DYS) with the school program located in a separate unattached building. Services at Casa Isla support the DYS mission of protecting the public and preventing crime by promoting positive change in the lives of youth committed to its custody. The program provides a secure environment where youth learn and practice new skills and behaviors based on the cognitive behavioral framework of services. Casa Isla is a highly structured facility that supports programming to the youth it serves and to community stakeholders.

The facility is staff secure. Doors are locked from the exterior side to prevent unauthorized access. There is no perimeter fence. Youth sleeping rooms are located on the first floor. All bedrooms are designed for double occupancy. There are single and multiple user bathrooms and multi-user showers. Multi-user showers are appropriately partitioned for safety and privacy. Only one youth is permitted in the bathroom and shower at a time.

The treatment program has a variable length of stay of 3-8 months depending on behavior and progress within the program. The revocation program also has a variable length of stay between 1-30 days. There were 8 youth in the treatment program on the date of the audit and zero youth in the revocation program.

Administrative investigations regarding allegations of abuse are conducted by the Massachusetts Division of Youth Services (DYS). Criminal investigations of sexual abuse, assault and harassment are conducted by the Massachusetts State Police. Forensic examinations and evidence collection are performed at local healthcare facilities through a state-wide Memorandum of Understanding with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

There was one allegation of sexually inappropriate behavior by staff during the past year. The staff alleged to have been involved have been suspended pending the outcome of the investigation.

**SUMMARY OF AUDIT FINDINGS:** Auditor arrived at the facility the morning of August 21, 2014. An entrance meeting was held with the Program Director (who also serves as the PREA Compliance Manager), Clinical Supervisor and the DYS PREA Coordinator.

A complete tour of the facility took approximate 45 minutes. All areas were well maintained. The facility has a video surveillance system which provides 90 % coverage of all program areas. There is a camera view of all doors in the facility. There are no cameras in the bedrooms or bathrooms. The system had an additional nine cameras added in July 2014. Robust staffing (4 : 1), significantly above the standards, and excellent supervision practices fully mitigate any concerns regarding blind spots. Bathrooms and bedrooms are heavily supervised when in use. This was confirmed by all staff and youth interviewed, and observation of practice. Sight lines were good in all housing areas. The designated posts for the overnight staff are located to facilitate sight and sound supervision.

Youth were observed in school, working in the kitchen, during movement, and at meals. Observations of staff supervision practices were consistent with the agencies policies. Interactions between staff and youth were boundary appropriate, respectful and professional.

The PREA education program for youth and screening for risk are conducted by clinical staff on the date of admission, and documented in a data base known as the DYS Juvenile Justice Enterprise Management System (JJEMS). Information in JJEMS is available to all programs (vendor providers and DYS operated programs). This system allows for a very high level of fidelity regarding treatment plans and service needs throughout the DYS continuum of care.

There was one allegation during this audit period. This was verified by email from the DYS Director of Investigations, who confirmed that the investigation is still ongoing. The youth who made the allegation is no longer at the facility.

This auditor interviewed the following staff titles:

* Program Director
* Clinical Supervisor
* DYS PREA Coordinator
* Registered Nurse
* Assistant Supervisor
* Direct Care Workers
* Shift Supervisor
* Facility PREA Compliance Manager

All staff at the program are fully trained and able to function as direct-care staff. Experience levels ranged from five months to 25 years. All presented as very knowledgeable about their jobs and highly dedicated to keeping youth safe. The agency’s commitment to PREA was also very evident during interviews. Staff members were not only aware of their agency’s policies and procedures, but were able to discuss PREA and how it related to the overall mission of the program and the agency’s mission as a whole.

All staff members were well versed in their obligations as mandated reporters. All felt well supported by the agency, and particularly the Program Director, and had no fear regarding retaliation for reporting abuse. All staff have received PREA specific training as first responders and all knew exactly what to do if they were a first responder. All felt empowered to proactively address issues related to sexual violence and were able to describe actions they would take to prevent and/or deter possible acts of sexual violence.

A total of four youth at the program were interviewed. Three youth were working in the community and one youth opted not to be interviewed. There were no youth currently at the facility that had made an allegation of abuse. There were no youth at the program who identified as LGBTI (although all youth acknowledged being asked about sexual orientation upon admission). All youth interviewed had extensive knowledge of the right to be free from sexual abuse, assault or harassment. All youth acknowledged being screened upon admission (screening actually occurs on date of admission, which far exceeds the standard) and receiving information upon admission on their right to be free from abuse in any form. All youth knew multiple ways to report abuse and felt very confident that any complaint they made would be properly addressed. None of the youth reported ever having fear for their safety while at the facility (or any program in the DYS continuum of care). All said they felt very safe at the facility.

There were no indicators of non-compliance from the interviews with staff and youth, and no indicators of non-compliance from the facility tour or observation of practice.

**STANDARDS DETERMINATION TOTALS:**

**Exceeds Standard – 3 Standards or approximately 7% of total standards.**

**Meets Standard - 38 Standards or approximately 93% of total standards.**

**Does Not Meet Standard – Zero Standards or 0% of total standards**

**CORRECTIVE ACTION PLANS**

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| **Standard** | **Deficiency** | **Action(s) Needed** | **Documentation** |
| **N/A\*** | **N/A** | **N/A** | **N/A** |
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**\*Note-All standards were found to be in compliance. No corrective action is required.**

**AUDITOR CERTIFICATION:**

This auditor certifies that no conflict of interest exists with respect to his ability to conduct an audit of the Massachusetts Division of Youth Services, Casa Isla or Volunteers of America of Massachusetts.

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Kurt Pfisterer, Dual Certified PREA Auditor Date