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

**JUVENILE FACILITIES**

**INTERIM** **FINAL**

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| **Dates of on-site audit:** | **April 8, 2015** | |
| **FACILITY INFORMATION** | | |
| **Name of Facility:** | **Westboro Sharp Building** | |
| **AGENCY INFORMATION** | | |
| **Name of Agency:** | **Massachusetts Department of Youth Services** | |
| **Governing Authority or Parent Agency:** | **Massachusetts Department of Youth Services** | |
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**NARRATIVE:** The Westboro Sharp Building is a secure 27 bed facility for male adolescents operated by the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services (DYS). The on-site portion of the PREA Audit took place April 8, 2015 and covered the audit period of April 8, 2014 to April 8, 2015. On the morning of April 8, 2015 this auditor entered the facility for purposes of conducting an on sight tour of the facility and interviewing youth, staff, volunteers and contractors. The facility provided a list of all staff by shift and employee job categories and a list of all youth by housing unit. Prior to arrival this auditor reviewed pertinent agency policies, procedures, and related documentation used to demonstrate compliance with the Juvenile Facility PREA Standards. The pre-audit review of documents contained in the Pre-Audit Questionnaire submitted by the facility prompted few questions. Answers to those questions were submitted to this auditor by the facility staff and any additional remaining questions were resolved during the audit. This auditor interviewed ten of the current 21 youth. The youth interviewed were a representative sample from each of the two housing units. Length of stay for those interviewed ranged from one day to 5.5 months. There were no youth who identified themselves as lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender or intersex and no youth who needed translation services. No youth had specifically requested to speak with this auditor nor had this auditor received any written correspondence from youth or staff. There were no youth currently in the program who made an allegation of sexual abuse or sexual harassment.

During the tour, additional questions were answered by executive and upper-level management staff. Staff and youth interviews followed and were conducted privately in a room with a large observation window. There are no SANE or SAFE staff employed at the facility. These services are available at the local hospital through a state-wide Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This auditor reviewed the MOU to provide SANE and SAFE services, and crisis counseling. This auditor interviewed members of the incident review team and the staff member charged with monitoring retaliation. Administrative investigations (sexual harassment only) are conducted by trained DYS staff and criminal investigations are conducted exclusively by the Massachusetts State Police. There were no volunteers or contractors interviewed as none were at the facility or available during the audit. The agency Executive Director had been previously interviewed by this auditor.

**DESCRIPTION OF FACILITY CHARACTERISTICS:** The Westboro Sharp Building is a 27 bed secure juvenile facility operated by the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services (DYS). The facility consists of two floors (2nd and 3rd ) within the Sharp Building. There are two distinct programs within the Westboro Sharp Building; Westboro Reception Unit and the Sharp Transition Program.

Westboro Reception Unit (WRU) is a 15 bed (all individual rooms) hardware secure detention and revocation facility for adolescent males between the ages of 12-21. It is the goal of WRU to safely contain residents in a secure youth-friendly environment while meeting physical, psychological, and educational needs. WRU provides structured programming with opportunities to develop and practice positive, personal, social, and academic skills.

WRU focuses on positive youth development via a strength-based behavioral management system which includes a strong clinical component comprising of individual and group therapies. This system is designed to empower youth while simultaneously teaching them responsibility, accountability and pro-social behaviors. WRU’s practices are based on the belief that every individual has the capacity for positive change. Through a multidisciplinary approach, WRU assists residents in achieving this goal and, more specifically, gaining increased insight and the skills necessary to be successful in a less secure setting with eventual transition to the community. There were 11 youth in program on the first day of the audit.

The Sharp Transition Program is a 12-bed (all individual rooms) hardware secure revocation and transition facility offering clinical, educational, and residential services to adolescents between the ages of 13 and 21. Our residents consist of adolescents who are committed to the Department of Youth Services who have violated their grant of conditional liberty (GCL) in some way in the community, including new criminal charges. The program’s goal is to provide both short-term stabilization and re-orientation to community goals for those youth whose stay is “short-term” and to provide ongoing counseling, education, and residential services for those who may spend a number of months with us awaiting court dates and trial.

To that end, the program is designed to meet the varied needs of adolescents who may be on drastically different plans. The program incorporates a positive-based incentive system into its residential services which provides reinforcement and support for behaviors which would increase success upon a return to the community. The program utilizes both individual counseling sessions and group counseling with a specific focus on building the skills required for growth in a community setting. The program also provides educational services (including teachers certified in Special Education) designed to maintain the youths’ progress in school prior to their arrival in the program. There were 10 youth in program on the first day of the audit.

The Westboro Sharp Building maintains 24 hour supervisory coverage as well as an On-Call Administrator.

**SUMMARY OF AUDIT FINDINGS:** Auditor arrived at the facility the morning of April 8, 2015. An entrance meeting was held with the Facility Administrator, who also serves as the PREA Compliance Manager, and the DYS PREA Coordinator.

A complete tour of the facility took approximately one hour. All areas were well maintained. The facility has a video surveillance system which provides coverage for 95% of the facility. The system provides coverage of the recreation areas, dining hall, all housing units, hallways and education areas. There are no cameras in the youths’ rooms. There is a camera view of all doors in areas where youth are permitted. Observed staffing (3 : 1), while this auditor was on site exceeds the standards requirement of 8: 1. Both programs have multi-stall showers and toilets which are appropriately partitioned for privacy and properly supervised when more than one youth is in the room. Youth are permitted to shower and use the bathroom alone if requested. This was confirmed by all staff and youth interviewed, and observation of practice. Sight lines are good in all housing areas (there are no unmitigated blind spots on the housing units).

Youth were observed during work details, in school, during movement, and at meals. Observations of staff supervision practices were consistent with the agencies policies.

The PREA screening for risk is conducted by the clinical staff on the date of admission, and documented. All youth interviewed acknowledged being screened on the date of admission as well as being seen by medical staff within 24 hours of admission.

Administrative investigations regarding allegations of sexual harassment are conducted by trained DYS investigators. A review of investigators’ reports confirmed an aggressive response to all allegations of harassment. Criminal investigations of sexual abuse and assault are conducted by the Massachusetts State Police. Telephone and email contact with the Deputy Chief of Police confirm that there were no incidents of sexual abuse or assault during this audit period. Forensic examinations and evidence collection are performed at the Bay State Medical Center. A state-wide MOU is in place to provide forensic examinations and victims’ services.

This auditor interviewed the following staff titles (number in parentheses indicates more than one staff in that title was interviewed):

* Facility Administrator
* Clinician Director
* Program Director (2)
* Assistant Program Director (2)
* DYS PREA Coordinator
* Nurse
* Group Worker I, II and III (9)
* Facility PREA Compliance Manager

Random direct-care staff were selected for interviews to include staff from all housing units. Experience levels ranged from one and a half to over 24 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 knew their obligations as mandated reporters and first responders. All felt well supported by facility management, and had no fear regarding retaliation for reporting abuse. All staff have received PREA specific training as first responders and all knew 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 potential and/or imminent threats of sexual violence.

A total of 10 youth at the facility were interviewed, and included youth from all housing units. Ages ranged from 15 to 18 years. There were no youth currently at the facility that had made an allegation of abuse. There were no youth currently at the facility who had reported an allegation of sexual harassment. There were no youth at the program who identified as LGBTI or had been identified as gender non-conforming in appearance. 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 were aware of multiple methods for reporting abuse. 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. No youth reported ever having fear for their safety while at the facility or at any time during commitment with DYS. All said they currently felt safe at the facility. Many said that they felt safer at the facility than on the streets.

The quality and organization of the documentation provided to this auditor was outstanding. The pre-audit questionnaire completed by the DYS State-Wide PREA Coordinator is one of the better ones I have ever received. The referenced documents in the questionnaire were provided electronically.

The organized manner in which the interviews were facilitated by the PREA Compliance Manager and the DYS State-Wide PREA Coordinator made the process go very smoothly and allowed for lengthy interviews with no wasted time in between.

The Westfield Youth Services Center is an excellent juvenile justice facility. The scope of this audit (PREA compliance) does not afford the opportunity to go into all the positive aspects of the program.

**STANDARDS DETERMINATION TOTALS:**

**Exceeds Standard – 2 (Two) Standards or approximately 4% of total standards.**

**Meets Standard - 40 (Forty) Standards or approximately 96% of total standards.**

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

**AUDITOR CERTIFICATION**

This auditor certifies that no conflict of interest exists with respect to his ability to conduct an audit of the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services or the Westboro Sharp Building.

\_\_**Kurt Pfisterer/s/**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_ April 23, 2015

Kurt Pfisterer, Dual Certified PREA Auditor Date