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

**JUVENILE FACILITIES**

[ ] **INTERIM** [x] **FINAL**

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| **Dates of on-site audit:** | **April 6-7, 2015** |
| **FACILITY INFORMATION** |
| **Name of Facility:** | **Westfield Youth Services Center** |
| **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 Westfield Youth Services Center is a secure 55 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 6-7, 2015 and covered the audit period of April 6, 2014 to April 6, 2015. On the morning of April 6, 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 45 youth. The youth interviewed were a representative sample from each of the four housing units. Length of stay for those interviewed ranged from two weeks to 12 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 video surveillance. 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 Westfield Youth Services Center is a 55 bed secure juvenile facility operated by the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services (DYS). The facility consists of a single brick and mortar building within a secure, fenced perimeter. There are four distinct programs within the Westfield Youth Services Center; Detention Unit A, Detention Unit B, the Revocation Program and the Stabilization Program.

Detention Unit A is a 15 bed hardware secure program for the Department of Youth Services. Bedrooms have the capacity to house two youth. All youth were housed in single rooms at the time of the on-site audit. Bathrooms are for multiple users and have three shower stalls, toilets and sinks. Age range of the youth served is 12 – 21 years. There were 14 youth in the program on the first day of the on-site audit.

The program’s stated goal is to protect the public, prevent crime, and promote positive opportunities for the youth in care; as well as to place the right youth in the right place for the right reason. They provide an array of services in collaboration with community based organizations and other law enforcement agencies. These services include education, recreation, the Advocacy Program, group and individual counseling (participation is mandatory) and religious services (voluntary).

Detention Unit B is a 15 bed hardware secure program for the Department of Youth Services. Bedrooms have the capacity to house two youth. All youth were housed in single rooms at the time of the on-site audit. Bathrooms are for multiple users and have three shower stalls, toilets and sinks. Age range of the youth served is 12 – 21 years. There were 12 youth in the program on the first day of the on-site audit.

The program’s stated goal is to protect the public, prevent crime, and promote positive opportunities for the youth in care; as well as to place the right youth in the right place for the right reason. They provide an array of services in collaboration with community based organizations and other law enforcement agencies. These services include education, recreation, the Advocacy Program, group and individual counseling (participation is mandatory) and religious services (voluntary).

The Revocation Program is a short term 15 bed program that receives committed youth from the community and focuses in on the behaviors that were occurring that led to the youth violating his Grant of Conditional Liberty resulting in him being revocated. Upon entering the program an “Intake Meeting” would take place which would include the youth’s caseworker, program clinician, program supervisor and an educational staff. Problematic behaviors are identified by the youth’s caseworker and are shared with the program. Shortly thereafter a revocation hearing will take place and the youth is assigned the number of days that he will spend in the program ranging from 1 to 30 days. The youth has the right to free legal counsel during the revocation hearing process. Circumstances do occur which could result in youth being assigned a 90 to 120 day stay and ultimately being transferred to a program that is designed for that length of stay. The program also takes youth who have been removed from other programs and may be escalated to the “Regional Review Team” for an extended stay somewhere else or youth who have picked up new charges in the community and comes in on “Dual Status” and now has court dates to attend.

Upon intake each new youth is required to complete a “Temporary Distress Tolerance Plan” which helps identify behavioral triggers and coping skills that will assist him in addressing inappropriate behaviors. It also makes staff aware of the triggers and the coping skills that the youth will need to use. Within 72 hours he is required to complete an additional “Extended Distress Tolerance Plan”. During the youth’s stay he is expected to attend and participate in school (5.5 hours classroom time). He is also required to attend “What Works” clinical group two times per week and complete the weekly homework associated with the group along with his DBT Diary and homework. Each youth is assigned a program advocate who meets with him during the week and completes a weekly advocate report that requires behavior summaries and sign-offs from all components of the program. The program has a Clinical Coordinator and two clinicians who meet with the youth on a daily basis for individual therapy and also facilitate “Youth Planning Team Meetings”. These meetings are attended by the youth, his caseworker, parent/guardian and other stakeholders. The meetings focus on transition issues and who would be responsible for looking into them and resolving them, such as housing, school, employment, and future medical appointments. The meetings also ensure everyone at the table is aware of the plan and any of the obstacles. These meetings are held weekly for all youth transitioning back to the community. On the first day of the on-site audit there were 13 youth in the program.

The Stabilization Unit is a 10 bed program for adolescent males. This is a high security program with the ability to accommodate youth from all regions of Massachusetts. The youth admitted to this program were not meeting the expectations of their respective secure treatment facilities and were recommended for transfer to the Stabilization Unit. The goal is to provide an environment which promotes positive youth development, good character, and offers the opportunity for a successful transition back to the youth’s prior program. The program is comprised of three components; Education, Clinical, and Residential. Each component has an equally shared responsibility in the development of a youth’s growth while in the Stabilization Unit. A standard of excellence is expected from staff as well as youth. Staff are encouraged to take initiative in programming and actively participate in clinical groups, school, and coaching recreational activities. On the first day of the on-site audit there were six youth in the program.

Westfield 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 6, 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 two hours. 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 gym, 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. Showers and bathrooms on the Revocation Unit and Stabilization Unit are for individual use. The Detention Units have multi-stall showers and toilets which are appropriately partitioned for privacy and properly supervised when more than one youth is in the room. This was confirmed by all staff and youth interviewed, and observation of practice. Sight lines were excellent 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
* Program Director (3)
* Assistant Program Director (4)
* DYS PREA Coordinator
* Nurse
* Group Worker I, II and III (10)
* Facility PREA Compliance Manager

Random direct-care staff were selected for interviews to include staff from all housing units. Experience levels ranged from two to over 26 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 Westfield Youth Services Center.

\_\_**Kurt Pfisterer/s/**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_ April 21, 2015

Kurt Pfisterer, Dual Certified PREA Auditor Date