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| Correctional Consultant  u.s. Department of Justice  Dual-Certified PREA Auditor Juvenile Facilities and  ADult prisons and Jails    **98 Fox Hollow**  **Rensselaer, New York**  **12144**  Phone: 518 326-0302    E-mail: kurtpfisterer@gmail.com  “Because there’s no such thing as a deserving victim”  Kurt Pfisterer | July 15, 2016  Peter Forbes  Commissioner  Massachusetts Department of Youth Services  600 Washington St. 4th. Floor  Boston, MA  Dear Commissioner,  I have worked in the field of Juvenile Justice for over 36 years in a variety of capacities. I have conducted over 85 PREA compliance audits throughout the country. During the course of these audits I interviewed hundreds of staff members from all program areas and hundreds of youth and adults that were at the facilities at the time of the on-site audits. While I observed many outstanding individual programs and offerings for youth, I have never encountered a state juvenile justice system quite like the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services (DYS).    The primary difference between DYS and the rest of the country with regard to implementation of PREA is the consolidation of the entire system under one juvenile justice agency. Detention, assessment, treatment, community re-entry, aftercare and revocation, and the vendor-providers of these services, all under the guidance, direction and oversight of DYS. In my experience Massachusetts in unique in this regard. In most states detention services are a local government function and privately operated programs are supplements to the system, not a fully integrated part of a seamless continuum of care.  The second distinction is fidelity of the mission, core values and services across the full continuum of care regardless of the program’s operator. With multiple vendor-providers and DYS operated programs at all levels of care this is not possible without a huge commitment of time, money and resources. DYS has made this commitment and the results are evident at every program (56 residential programs and five Alternative Lock-up Programs) I have visited in the past three years.  DYS’ commitment to the implementation of the PREA standards and PREA compliance across the full spectrum of service providers (state operated programs and contract vendor providers) is second to none. Massachusetts has created a seamless and coordinated implementation of the PREA standards across its ***ENTIRE*** juvenile justice. I do not believe there is any other state that can claim the entire juvenile justice system (intake, detention, residential treatment, aftercare and privately operated programs) in their state is in full compliance with PREA. In my professional opinion, youth involved in the Massachusetts juvenile justice system are some of the safest youth in the country in terms of protection from sexual violence.  Before I close, I would be remiss if I did not take the time to express my thanks and appreciation to State-Wide PREA Coordinator Monica King and her supervisor, Director of Residential Operations, Nancy Carter for their time and assistance throughout this three year audit cycle. Their assistance, logistical support, planning and audit coordination was outstanding and I cannot thank you enough having them available for the entire three years.  In closing, I must repeat my closing from three years ago when this all began. I have spent my entire professional life (36 plus years and counting) committed to keeping youth safe while in placement away from home. I have audited, toured, observed and provided technical assistance to jurisdictions and programs all over the country. I have never seen a juvenile justice system that provides such a seamless and safe continuum of care to the youth in its custody. DYS does it as good as any and better than all I’ve seen.  Thank you for allowing me the privilege and pleasure of assisting you in your ongoing efforts to keep the youth in your care safe from sexual violence.  Sincerely,  Kurt Pfisterer  U.S. Department of Justice  Dual Certified PREA Auditor  98 Fox Hollow  Rensselaer, NY 12144 |
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