



As active members of the community, we share a vision that all children, youth and families
reach their fullest potential in a safe and nurturing environment

**Testimony of Patricia Martinez
Director of the Rhode Island Department of Children,
Youth and Families
Department of Justice
Office of Civil Rights
Prison Rape Enforcement Act
June 3, 2010**

I want to first thank the panel for this opportunity to testify before you today. Joining me are Stephanie Terry, the Associate Director of Child Welfare and Kevin Aucoin, the Acting Superintendent of the Rhode Island Training School. Our PREA Coordinator for the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), Dr. Charles Golembeske, unfortunately is not with us due to his medical leave status.

DCYF is a unified state agency with statutory responsibility for children's behavioral health, child welfare and child protection, juvenile probation, parole, detention and secure corrections. All investigations of child abuse, including sexual abuse and institutional abuse, are conducted by Child Protective Services (CPS), which is operationally separate and has a separate chain of command from the Division of Juvenile Correctional Services (JCS). JCS operates the RI Training School, the state's only juvenile detention and correctional Facility).

Prior to January of 2009, the Training School housed its male and female population in eight individual units. The units consisted of a detention center, a maximum security unit, a specialized treatment unit, a substance abuse unit, and four general population units. The total capacity was 205.

Currently, the Rhode Island Training School consists of three facilities which have a combined capacity of 172 youth. These include: a detention and assessment center for males with a capacity of 52 youth; a youth development center for males with a capacity of 96 youth and a separate facility for the female population with a capacity of 24 youth.

The Youth Development Center is comprised of four pods as follows:

- **Specialized Treatment Program:** This program focuses on two distinct populations: 1) youth whose emotional and behavioral health needs are reflected in aggressive behaviors and 2) those youth who are adjudicated sex offenders or youth with a history of sex offending behaviors.
- **Substance Abuse Treatment Program:** This program focuses on youth whose substance abuse treatment needs are assessed as intensive enough to need a residential level of care.

- **General Population Program:** This program focuses on youth with longer sentences, but whose charges and behaviors are not such that they require placement in the Specialized Treatment Program.
- **Transitional Program:** This program assists youth in integrating the youth into the community.

The female population is housed in a separate facility which can accommodate up to 24 youth. The female facility houses both adjudicated and non adjudicated youth. The female population receives educational, clinical and medical programming which are equivalent to the male population.

Staffing:

Our facilities are staffed with a variety of different levels of classifications. The staffing configuration is as follows:

- Unit Managers
- Clinical Social Workers
- Juvenile Program Workers
- Educational Staff on grounds during the school day Monday through Friday (facility capacity)
- Three registered nurses are available on site from 7:00 AM to 3:00 PM and 2 RNs are on site from 3:00 PM to 11:00 PM; provide daily sick call at 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM and well as med passes on every unit at 8:00 AM, 12:00 PM, 4:00 PM, and 8:00 PM.
- Medical/Psychiatric services are provided through the Lifespan Hospital System the service includes a full service clinic with MDs, dentistry and psychiatry on site. Any youth requiring specialty care are seen at Hasbro Children's Hospital.

Training Academy:

Custody and control staff are required to successfully complete a six week Training Academy before assuming their posts. The Training Academy covers the full range of responsibilities for custody and care staff and includes two modules of four hours each on issues related to abuse of residents. One module is presented by the DCYF Chief of Child Protective Services and covers topics including but not limited to: all RI laws related to abuse and reporting of abuse of children with special emphasis on implications for staff of and residents at the RI Training School; the investigative process and documentation.

A second training module is presented by the Unit Manager of the Specialized Treatment Unit. This module focuses on topics including but not limited to: common patterns of victimization, grooming behaviors, danger signs, appropriate styles of interaction between residents and between staff and residents; resources for staff observing potentially dangerous or problematic behaviors; and therapeutic responses to residents who present with offending behaviors or who may disclose victimization.

The Child Welfare Institute, the training arm of the department and a collaboration of DCYF and the Rhode Island College School of Social Work, offers follow up training on these issues for all

department staff. Staff are also encouraged to bring any issue of concern immediately to their supervisor or an administrator for guidance.

Clinical staff (Physical, Dental and Behavioral Health) are licensed professionals within their respective disciplines and, as such, are required to obtain continuing education units (CEUs) to maintain licensure/certification.

Safety and Risk Assessments:

All detained male and female youth are screened and assessed through the Massachusetts Youth Screening Inventory Version 2 (MAYSI II) within 48 to 72 hours of being detained. A safety and risk assessment utilizing a standard instrument is performed upon intake at the RITS. In addition, detained juveniles have access to two masters level clinical social workers in the male detention facility and one masters level clinical social worker in the female facility.

At the point of adjudication the Global Assessment of Individual Needs (GAIN) Assessment Tool is administered to the male and female youth. This tool identifies treatment needs across domains including mental health substance abuse, developmental competencies, and social skills. The GAIN is the tool identified by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration as the comprehensive assessment validated for this population. As well, a battery of nationally standardized education and aptitude tests are administered. Finally, information regarding the charge on which the youth was adjudicated and previous history in the justice system is reviewed.

Programming for Youth

Programming services for youth at the Training School are available equally to both boys and girls. Each youth who is sentenced to the Training School has an individualized treatment plan. This plan is developed within 30 days of the youth's commitment to the facility.

Key programming services include:

- Access to mental health and substance abuse services in accordance with the youth's treatment needs;
- Specialized substance abuse treatment programming, conducted by a contracted vendor, for all youth housed in the Substance Abuse Treatment Program pod;
- Opportunities to participate in substance abuse treatment support groups;
- Integrated mental health services conducted through a contract with Lifespan. This program provides clinical and psycho-educational groups for residents in the following areas: life skills, anger management, conflict resolution, and healthy living plans. Further, the mental health program provides both group and individual therapy for all youth housed in the Specialized Treatment Program pod.

In addition the Training School emphasizes transitional planning for all youth committed to the facility. The transitional programming begins at the time a youth enters the facility. The Training School staff work with one of our vendors who are associated with DCYF's Family Care Community Partnership (FCCP) program to help the youth and the family prepare for reintegration of the youth into the community. The FCCP is a community-based prevention, early intervention and aftercare services program based on a wraparound service model. The FCCP, a phase of Rhode Island's Integrated System of Care transformation, ensures that the

youth and the family are connected with appropriate support services that will aid in the youth's after care plan. The goal is to ensure that the services are in place prior to a youth's discharge from the facility. All youth are required to have a transitional plan in place within 30 days discharge.

Responses to complaints of abuse and/or neglect:

All complaints of abuse and neglect are referred to the investigative unit within DCYF's Child Protective Services (CPS), a part of our Child Welfare Division. The Child Welfare Division is a separate division within the department with a separate chain of command. CPS is charged by statute to investigate reports of institutional abuse of a resident – including allegations of sexual abuse involving youth at the Training School.

The CPS Investigative Unit is led by the Chief of Child Protective Services, who has 30 years of experience in law enforcement/internal affairs, including service as the Chief of Police for one of RI's three largest cities and Chief of Investigations for the RI Department of the Attorney General. CPS collaborates closely with local law enforcement and with the Attorney General's Office in the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect. CPS also collaborates closely with the R.I. Office of the Child Advocate and treatment professionals at Lifespan and Hasbro Children's Hospital.

Lifespan is a statewide health care organization which includes a Level 1 Trauma Center and, through a contract with DCYF, provides all health care services to residents of the RITS. Lifespan has extensive experience in treating victims of sexual abuse in the community. Lifespan's Hasbro Children's Hospital convenes a Multi-disciplinary Child Protection Team weekly to discuss all cases of child abuse, including any reports of abuse originating from the Training School. All complaints of institutional abuse also are referred to the Rhode Island Office of the Child Advocate for an independent review and assessment.

Recommendations to reduce and eliminate sexual assault; sexual abuse, or sexually related inappropriate relationships between juvenile offenders, between juvenile offenders and staff or between staff and juvenile offenders:

The key to making the Training School environment a place where youth are safe and free from sexual assault and predation is vigilant enforcement and promoting awareness among staff and residents. This responsibility begins with the executive leadership team of the facility and must be reinforced at the management and line staff level within the respective units. We promote an atmosphere where residents have access to management and administrative staff on a regular basis, as well as access to mental health, educational and medical professionals. In addition, correctional staff must be vigilant in their observation of youth to ensure that a youth's safety and welfare are not compromised.

The Rhode Island Training School offers a wide array of services for youth and there are a number of different opportunities for youth to share information about issues relating to abuse. The Training School Administration will continue to work closely with the state Child Advocate and in promoting open access youth and safety. Our multi disciplinary team approach promotes an atmosphere which emphasizes clinical and therapeutic modalities. In addition, Training School staff are regularly afforded training opportunities which emphasize how to work with abuse reactive types of behavior and effective interventions.

As we move forward, the Rhode Island Training School will continue to enhance its performance in promoting an awareness sexual assaults and sexually related inappropriate relationships. Our recent move into two new buildings has provided 24/7 video surveillance capability within the two facilities which house the male population. The video surveillance of both residents and staff afford the administration the opportunity to monitor the movement of youth within the facility as well as provide a means to evaluate the effectiveness of staff supervision.

Additionally, the Training School will continue its efforts to emphasize community based services and to promote transitional planning which is designed to ensure a safe and lasting reintegration of youth into the community. To date, through our efforts, we have been successful at reducing our census at the Training School from in excess of 205 youth to a present census of 147 youth. At present, the average length of stay for a youth in the Youth Development Program is just under six months. The ability to reintegrate youth into the community is a key element to promoting a safe and effective rehabilitative environment.

Once again, I wish to thank the panel for affording the Rhode Island delegation with an opportunity to share our success in protecting the welfare of the youth who are incarcerated at the Rhode Island Training School.