

# REPORT HIGHLIGHTS



DIVISION OF YOUTH CORRECTIONS  
PERFORMANCE AUDIT, SEPTEMBER 2016

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

## CONCERN

Our audit found that the Division of Youth Corrections (Division) could improve its management and documentation of procedures to help ensure youth and staff safety at all secure facilities. This includes the need to strengthen controls over seclusion, staff-directed timeouts, reporting of fights, assaults, and critical incidents, and oversight of the two contractor-operated secure facilities.

## KEY FINDINGS

- The Division does not always use and document seclusion incidents in accordance with statute and Division policy. For example, for 13 of the 32 sampled seclusion incidents (41 percent), facility staff did not document that the emergency situations continued, and therefore, the Division could not demonstrate that the continued seclusions were necessary and appropriate.
- In practice, there are limited differences in how staff-directed timeouts and seclusion are experienced by youth and staff-directed timeouts are not a less restrictive alternative to seclusion, as they were intended to be. Both tools are used to address similar behaviors, both place the youth in isolation, and both have the same requirements for releasing youth.
- Facility staff do not consistently comply with Division requirements related to fights, assaults, and critical incidents. We found problems with 16 of the 20 fights or assaults (80 percent) and all 10 of the critical incidents we reviewed. For example, we found that reports lacked required information or contained inaccurate information and some notifications did not occur or were not timely.
- The Division does not provide the same level of oversight of the two contractor-operated secure facilities as it does with the 10 state-operated secure facilities. We found that the Division does not (1) require the contractor to provide sufficient performance data, (2) hold the contractor-operated facilities to the same standards as state-operated facilities, or (3) coordinate its monitoring of the contract facilities.

## BACKGROUND

- The Division's mission is to protect, restore, and improve public safety for youth offenders aged 10 through 21.
- The Division oversees 10 state-operated secure facilities and two contractor-operated secure facilities. Secure facilities have locked doors and fencing to prevent escapes.
- In Fiscal Year 2016, the Division spent \$133.7 million on state- and contractor-operated facilities.
- In Fiscal Year 2016, the Division admitted 1,369 committed youth and 6,813 detained youth to secure facilities.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure that secure facilities use and document seclusion appropriately by training facility staff on documentation, notification, and meeting requirements and conducting supervisory review of incident reporting.
- Ensure that secure facilities appropriately use staff-directed timeouts by revising Division policy to clearly differentiate between staff-directed timeouts and seclusion.
- Strengthen controls related to documentation and supervisory review of fights, assaults, and critical incidents.
- Revise the contracts for secure facilities to include performance measures, at a minimum, that hold the contract facilities to the same standards as state facilities, and strengthen contract monitoring responsibilities.