

**Arlington Community Services Board (CSB) – Children and Youth Committee  
December 7, 2015- Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Center (NVJDC) Site Visit**

**Committee Present:** Shauna Alonge (Co-chair), Linda Staheli, Marguerite Tomasek, Frank Haltiwanger, Earl Conklin

**Child and Family Services Division (CFSD) Staff:** Sharon Lawrence (Behavioral Health Bureau Chief), Tabitha Kelly (Division Chief), Sheila Guzman (Therapist), Violetta Battle (Supervisor), Norma Jimenez (Supervisor)

**Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Center Staff:** Darryl Poston (Executive Director), Jocelyn Mitchell (Director of Program Services), Lana Powers (Recreation and Volunteer Coordinator) and Christopher Ward (Compliance Manager)

**Juvenile Detention Commission Staff:** Dr. Taylor

**Call to order:** Tour of the facility was conducted by Lana W. Powers (Recreation & Volunteer Coordinator) which began at 6:40pm. Meeting commenced immediately after tour and was called to order by Shauna Alonge (Chair).

**Detention Meeting**

The Center serves youth from Arlington, Falls Church, and Alexandria. The committee visited the 70-unit facility which has a Pre- and Post- Detention Program consisting of 5 units (3 Pre-Dispositional; 1 Post- Disposition (New Beginnings); and 1 Federal program (youth placed by ICE, services provided by the Center under a federal grant). The detention center currently has an approximate census of 35 youth throughout all units, half of which are placed under the ICE grant. Within the past year, Arlington youth constitute the majority population more than any other jurisdiction (65%). Arlington youth are coming from a variety of schools and locales in Arlington; no trends have been observed in terms of whether certain middle or high schools have a bigger youth crime problem than others. Two youth are placed in the Post-Detention program at this time. Approximately 25 youth can be placed in the federal program; there are currently 14 youth placed.

Mr. Poston (Executive Director) expressed that the detention center staff are seeing an increase in “behavioral anomalies” that make them concerned about addressing mental health/behavioral health/substance abuse needs of youth. Earl explained the type of youth that enter the dispositional programs.

1. Pre-disposition: Youth charged with offenses, no conviction as of yet, held due to risk to themselves/others.
2. Post-disposition: Youth has been to court, found guilty, sentenced to up to 30 days in detention when ordered by the Judge.
3. New Beginnings is a 6-month program that serves an alternative to youth going down state to a more secured facility. The program “mirrors a group home” and provides various therapeutic modalities, including yoga, mindfulness, group, family, and individual therapy.

FY'15: Total Released: 335; Average Days of Stay: 25.67
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4. Mr. Poston provided a handout with statistics from the detention center (see attached).

The committee toured the classroom space where youth receive educational instruction. Alexandria provides teachers and other school staff to the detention center. The committee observed that the spaces were clean, vibrant, and contained many visual instructive materials and art work prepared by youth. Ms. Powers reported that efforts are made to keep students on track with their home school assignments.

The Process of Entry (Jocelyn Mitchell-Director of Program Services):

For youth entry, the initial contact begins with administration of the MAYSI (Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument Screening, which is used State wide) tool to examine the youth's risk factors, anxiety, suicidality, anger, and thought disturbance. Once a youth is placed, clinicians complete a more extensive assessment to determine the needs of youth. Discharge planning begins immediately as most youth are only at the detention center for a short period of time (length of stay is less than 10 days for pre-dispositional youth). As a result of the short stay, programming is not something that is highly emphasized.

The majority of the youth entering care have a previous history of treatment and/or medication management with a community provider or DHS. Clinicians work diligently to obtain medication for youth, whether or not they have insurance. There are some youth who are admitted that have not been medication compliant for some time. Staff work closed with Medical providers, probation and foster care. When youth do not have insurance, the detention center assumes financial responsibility for medication costs when there is a need.

There are two clinicians assigned to the detention center. Sheila Guzman (Arlington DHS) and currently the second position (Alexandria DHS) is vacant, but was once filled by Ms. Mitchell prior to her promotion. Ms. Mitchell expressed that staff provide assessments and recommendations to the Courts as requested. Behavioral Management Plans are implemented when necessary. Staff coordinate with pre-existing clinicians in the community to ensure compliance with treatment plans. It is rare for the detention center to create a treatment plan because of the short length of stay for pre-dispositional youth. However, if the youth is placed in New Beginnings, there is a treatment plan clinicians create.

Mr. Poston reports that the detention center is exploring ways to provide services for all youth regarding of youth placement. There is consideration regarding shifting the program model. Some challenges with shifting the program may include: pre-dispositional youth participating within groups that may impact their criminal case and self-disclosure. The committee expressed the need for groups in terms of early intervention. This matter is being looked at closely by center staff.

The Process of Entry (Sheila Guzman- Therapist/ Arlington County DHS/Detention):

Ms. Guzman explained that before a youth arrives for an intake, Fredy Martinez (Arlington DHS Court Liaison) will notify her of placement. The clinician communicates with probation regarding entry of youth. Longer assessments may be conducted for youth who have never been placed in detention. Ms. Guzman explained that when youth are in crisis, Emergency Services are called to assist.

Ms. Guzman coordinates with Post-Detention staff around therapy and transition youth to Substance Abuse Groups as a step down method. Ms. Guzman meets with youth on average once a week and will also check in more frequently. She assesses for crises and mental health status ongoing.

There are many youth with substance abuse issues and some are placed for probation violations for positive urinalysis and chemical dependency. Some of youth are later placed at Phoenix House when deemed appropriate for treatment. The committee inquired if Heroin and Methadone are highly used by youth. Ms. Guzman reports primary drug choices are synthetics (K2: synthetic form of marijuana), over the counter medications such as Triple C (Coricidin HBP Cough & Cold), and Marijuana.

During placement, youth in Post-Dispositional status receive individual and group therapy treatment. For youth in Pre-Dispositional status, group therapy is not offered due to short lengths of stay. However there is psychoeducation for substance abuse. Ms. Guzman reports that she provides provisional diagnoses, and makes outreach efforts to parents to connect to CSB or private providers. Youth are able to be assigned a substance abuse diagnosis while at the center.

Ms. Guzman shared that she has observed an increase in domestic minor sex trafficking in Arlington. She has changed her assessment to gather information from youth who may have been victimized. Ms. Guzman has assessed 4-5 girls during the summer who were involved in trafficking as victims.

The committee inquired about educational placement for youth exiting detention. Some youth leaving the detention center transition to New Directions. The youth involved with New Directions are court involved and the program provides a small setting (20 youth).

Extra-curriculum Programming:

Ms. Staheli mentioned the Mindfulness Yoga program held at the detention center. The committee inquired about youth receptiveness to the program. Mr. Poston reported that this program has been received positively by youth in the New Beginnings Program. The program was visited by Eric Holder (United States Attorney General) and he asked the youth their thoughts about Yoga. Due to the feedback, Mr. Holder has instructed the detention center, “not to get rid of it.”

NVJDC Challenges/Communication/Follow-Up:

- Mr. Poston expressed interest in hiring a Mental Health Specialist who would be available full-time given the “complex” emotional and substance abuse problems of youth entering the center. Currently, Arlington and Alexandria provide part-time positions which are managed by the County. Mr. Poston hopes to create a position to be fully funded solely for the Detention Center. He has included this position in his FY 2016 budget request.
- Database systems of health records are not integrated thus making communication slower and more difficult among the center, courts, and local CSBs.
- Ms. Tomasek raised a concern regarding educational continuity upon release. A Case Manager from the Court Services Unit (probation officer ) or DHS (Child Welfare if youth is in foster care) are assigned. Some discharged youth enter the alternative school Arlington offers called New Directions. Mr. Haltiwanger observed that in his experience this is a very good program for youth.
- The committee voiced concern about the frequent use of isolation/seclusion in the past. Mr. Poston acknowledged that when he took over as director around 18 months ago, he observed that isolation times were lengthy, rigid, and generally ineffective as a therapeutic tool. The length of time assigned for isolation was previously 24, 48, or 72 hours, with equal match with no improvement in behavior. However, this scheme has been eliminated under Mr. Poston’s leadership. Currently, isolation/ seclusion is connected to specific behavior and tied to youth no longer being a threat to themselves or others. Therefore, a youth could be assigned to seclusion for a short period of time, such as an hour. Mr. Ward (Compliance Manager) explained the utilization of a Behavior Chain Analysis which focuses on youth being given an opportunity to address behavior and process healthier ways of dealing with feelings and thoughts. This model teaches youth about triggers, drivers and functions of the behavior they exhibit and encourages positive behavior. The detention staff conduct skills training, distress tolerance, and problem solving for both staff and youth. The committee noted the positive changes initiated under Mr. Poston, including changes in seclusion policy, new therapeutic techniques being taught to staff and youth, and creation of a new Compliance Manager position to oversee therapeutic programming, among other duties.
- The committee asked about youth’s access to family via telephone. Mr. Poston indicated that youth are allowed 1 phone call a week; additional calls are earned privileges. The detention center encourages phone

contact to maintain family connections. For youth, who have children, visitation is allowed in addition to regular to family visits.

- Mr. Poston also informed the committee that plans are underway to improve/enhance secure outside space so that youth can spend additional time outside, such as to play sports, etc.
- Mr. Poston also informed the committee that he has changed detention center policy so that children of incarcerated youth are allowed to visit.

**Note: Due to nature of the meeting and time constraints, the following information was not reviewed or discussed. Ms. Lawrence has the information regarding DHS and will report during the January 2016 C&Y CSB meeting.**

- **Minutes review/approval**
- **Monthly Statistics and Trends**
- **Committee and DHS Outreach Efforts**
- **New Business**
- **Old Business**
- **Announcements**