

**JUVENILE JUSTICE MONITORING UNIT
STATE OF MARYLAND**

2024 SECOND QUARTER REPORT

The Maryland Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit(JJMU)

The Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit (JJMU) is responsible for reporting on Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) operated and licensed facilities across the state. Monitors from the unit conduct unannounced visits to these sites to guard against abuse and ensure youth receive appropriate treatment and services.

The mission of the JJMU is to promote the transformation of the juvenile justice system into one that meets the needs of Maryland's youth, families, and communities. This mission is accomplished by collaborating with all who are involved with the system.

The Unit has access to DJS incident and case note databases and to DJS internal investigation and grievance documents. Monitors spend considerable time gathering information and observing all aspects of operations. We sit in on activities and classes, interview youth, staff and administrators, and review incident-related footage and original incident report documentation.

The JJMU issues public reports covering each calendar quarter, which include data and analysis concerning treatment of and services provided to youth in DJS detention and placement facilities throughout our state. Formal responses from DJS and the Juvenile Services Education Program (JSEP), which is responsible for education services in DJS facilities, are included within our published reports.

The JJMU has been instrumental in driving positive changes in the Maryland juvenile justice system since its formation in the wake of widespread systemic abuse issues. The activities of the monitoring unit increase the transparency and accountability of the juvenile justice system and raise awareness of the needs of justice-involved Maryland youth. We will continue to push for the adoption of best practices as we evaluate current and emerging research that serves to both enhance public safety and produce positive outcomes for young people in contact with the juvenile justice system.



JUVENILE JUSTICE MONITORING UNIT
STATE OF MARYLAND

JJMU 2024 Second Quarter Report Compendium

The Maryland Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit (JJMU) issues public reports covering each calendar quarter that include data and analysis concerning treatment of and services provided to youth in Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) directly run and licensed facilities throughout Maryland. Enclosed please find the unit's compilation of second quarter 2024 reports.

The Maryland Department of Juvenile Services' response and a response from the Juvenile Services Education Program (JSEP) are included, as indicated on the contents page.

The JJMU 2024 Second Quarter Report compendium was produced by Margi Joshi, Nick Moroney, Tim Snyder, and Marvin Stone.

We respectfully submit this report to the Governor, members of the Maryland General Assembly, and the Secretary of the Department of Juvenile Services, as required under Maryland law.



JUVENILE JUSTICE MONITORING UNIT
STATE OF MARYLAND

September 2024

The Honorable Wes Moore, Governor
State of Maryland

The Honorable Bill Ferguson, President of the Senate
Maryland General Assembly

The Honorable Adrienne Jones, Speaker of the House of Delegates
Maryland General Assembly

Members of the General Assembly

The Honorable Vinny Schiraldi, Secretary
Department of Juvenile Services

Dear Governor Moore, Senate President Ferguson, Speaker of the House Jones, and Secretary Schiraldi:

This compendium provides a summary report on conditions and operations during the second quarter of 2024 for each detention and placement facility directly operated by the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department).

Respectfully submitted,

Nick Moroney

Nick Moroney
Director, Maryland Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit

JUVENILE JUSTICE MONITORING UNIT 2024 SECOND QUARTER REPORT

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DJS Hardware Secure Detention

DJS Committed Placement

Short-term, pre-disposition/pending placement:

- Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center (BCJJC)
- Cheltenham Youth Detention Center (CYDC)
- Charles H. Hickey, Jr., School (Hickey)
- Western Maryland Children's Center (WMCC)
- Lower Eastern Shore Children's Center (LESCC)

Long-term, post-disposition:

- Victor Cullen Center (Cullen)
- PEACE Academy for Girls (Unit inside WMCC detention center)
- Backbone Mountain and Green Ridge youth centers (two youth centers)

Incident and Population Trends

Second quarter 2024 population and incident trends versus second quarter of 2023:

- ❖ The population of incarcerated youth in DJS facilities continued to rise. The average daily population (ADP) of youth rose in all DJS-operated secure detention centers except for LESCC. The youth population also increased at all DJS-operated placement centers.
- ❖ Youth on youth fights and assaults in secure detention centers increased at Hickey and WMCC but decreased at BCJJC and LESCC. Fights and assaults also increased in committed placement at the Youth Centers but decreased at Victor Cullen.
- ❖ Physical restraints of youth by staff increased at all DJS-operated secure detention centers except for LESCC. Staff use of physical restraints on youth also increased in committed placement at the Youth Centers. Physical restraints of youth by staff decreased at Victor Cullen committed placement center.
- ❖ The use of mechanical restraints (handcuffs and or leg irons) inside secure detention facilities decreased at Hickey and BCJJC but increased at CYDC and WMCC. Mechanical restraint usage decreased in committed placement at Cullen and at the Youth Centers. Mechanical restraints were not used inside LESCC secure detention center during the second quarter of 2024.
- ❖ Incidents of reported seclusion decreased at Victor Cullen committed placement center. Seclusion also decreased at the LESCC and Hickey secure detention centers but increased at BCJJC, CYDC, and WMCC. CYDC had a high number of seclusions during the second quarter of 2024.
- ❖ There were 52 incidents involving suicide ideation with almost half of those incidents (24) reported from Green Ridge youth center during the second quarter of 2024 (compared to 27 incidents involving suicide ideation in the second quarter of 2023.) There were two attempts at suicide and 10 incidents of self-injurious behavior at DJS-operated facilities during the second quarter of 2024.

DETENTION CENTERS

Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center

The Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center (BCJJC) is a hardware secure (maximum-security) detention center for boys. The Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) owns and operates BCJJC. The DJS-rated housing capacity is 120 youth. Black youth represented 89% of total entries during the second quarter of 2024 (compared to 86% during the same period in 2023). Hispanic/Latino youth represented 5% of entries to BCJJC during the first quarter of 2024 (compared to 7% during the same period in 2023).

BCJJC – Selected Incident Categories	Q2 2022	Q2 2023	Q2 2024
Average Daily Population (ADP)	61	68	96
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	61	74	70
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	7	8	4
3. Physical Restraint	71	48	49
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	21	8	6
5. Seclusion	36	4	7
6. Contraband	4	1	3
7. Suicide Ideation	8	2	3
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	1
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	2	0	0

The average daily population at BCJJC increased by 41% during the second quarter of 2024 compared to the second quarter in 2023. Despite the sizeable increase in population, youth incidents involving aggression and staff use of mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) on youth inside the facility decreased. Physical restraints of youth by staff and incidents involving the use of seclusion increased only slightly when comparing the two time periods.

Second Quarter - Facility Strengths

- ✓ BCJJC is a DJS innovation team site which brings together staff, young people and their families, and facility management in collaboration to foster and maintain a positive facility culture.
- ✓ BCJJC is under the leadership of a capable and experienced administrator who has improved staff morale and created a safer facility environment benefitting both youth and staff.
- ✓ Activities for youth have increased including (after a long delay) the opening of a music room for youth use. After-school clubs are also offered and are well-attended, and students now have access to GED tutoring during weekends which is provided by an education staffer who volunteers her time.
- ✓ The school at BCJJC continues to successfully prepare multiple students to take and pass the GED exam.
- ✓ The pending placement units at BCJJC (which enables young people on a waiting list for placement to begin treatment programming) is well-run at BCJJC. [Young people transported to remotely located DJS placement sites in western Maryland frequently comment that they would rather go back to the pending placements sites in detention to complete their treatment.]

Second Quarter - Facility Concerns

- The heating and cooling system of the detention component at BCJJC continues to malfunction. For several days in June, the AC system stopped working, leading to uncomfortably hot living conditions for young people and a harsh working environment for staff. The immediate problem was mitigated, and the Department is working to permanently address the problem.
- Curbing the flow of contraband, primarily suboxone, inside DJS facilities (including BCJJC) has become increasingly challenging.
- The school at BCJJC continues to face teacher shortages which negatively impacts education service delivery.
- The scope of mental health services and level of expertise of service providers available to young people at BCJJC is often inadequate given the complex trauma and mental health-related needs of many of the youth incarcerated there.

- Education and direct-care staff need enhanced training and ongoing guidance on how to build rapport, form constructive relationships, and maintain professionalism and appropriate boundaries with young people.

Cheltenham Youth Detention Center

Cheltenham Youth Detention Center (CYDC), located in Prince George's County, is a hardware secure (locked and fenced) detention center owned and operated by the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department). The DJS-rated housing capacity is 72 young people. Black youth represented 75% of total youth entries during the second quarter of 2024, compared to 72% during the second quarter of 2023. Hispanic/Latino youth represented 16% of entries during the second quarter of 2024, compared to 18% during the same period in 2023.

CYDC– Selected Incident Categories	Q2 2022	Q2 2023	Q2 2024
Average Daily Population (ADP)	34	64	67
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	15	64	64
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	5	19	19
3. Physical Restraint	38	86	88
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	4	6	11
5. Seclusion	15	29	61
6. Contraband	2	8	6
7. Suicide Ideation	4	10	1
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	20	5	3

The average daily population at CYDC increased by 5% when comparing the second quarter of 2024 with the same period last year. Comparing the same two periods:

- Incidents of youth-on-youth aggression and alleged youth aggression against staff remained consistently high and physical restraints of youth by staff increased slightly.

- Reported instances when seclusion was used more than doubled.
- Use of mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) increased by 83% while the number of reported incidents involving contraband decreased.

Facility Culture

Managing conflict amongst youth was a significant struggle for Cheltenham during the second quarter of 2024. Direct-care staff at DJS continue to be trained in a reactive approach to youth conflict which heavily emphasizes physical and mechanical restraints and use of isolation (seclusion) and physical separation of youth from each other (“social separation”) in response to problematic youth behavior and group discord.

The Department needs to prioritize a change in facility culture at Cheltenham by creating a climate of physical and emotional safety and belonging for youth and staff.

Without proper resources, training, and supports devoted to culture change, crisis situations will continue to erupt on a frequent basis and typical staff responses to these situations such as isolation, separation and restraints will continue to be over-utilized. These strategies are not particularly effective in establishing safety for youth or staff. Nevertheless, without adequate know-how and modeling of a different approach, staff are left feeling overwhelmed by unsafe conditions and double down on utilization of these punitive responses as the high number of seclusions and ubiquitous use of social separation at Cheltenham demonstrates.

Social Separation

Social separation in which groups of kids were locked inside rooms without staff presence to separate them from other kids on their living unit was widely utilized at Cheltenham in the second quarter of 2024 as a means to address youth relational issues. Social separation does not address the root causes of youth conflict.

- In Incident 178268, four youth were locked in a unit TV room with no staff present within sight and sound of the locked-in youths. During an internal department investigation of the incident, a DJS investigator asked the assistant superintendent at the facility if it is typical to have youths locked in the TV room without a staff posted with the youth - the assistant superintendent replied, “Yeah that is typical.”

The youth in the TV room were being separated from another youth who was in the dayroom making a phone call. The youth locked in the TV room used an unknown object to pick the lock and broke out and assaulted the youth in the dayroom.

- In Incident 178617, a youth on separation from other youth was placed in the TV room for nearly four hours. Since the youth was alone in the room and was not allowed to leave, this situation is de facto seclusion. The youth eventually became agitated and

wanted to leave the room. He broke the TV stand, stood on a chair, and took his shirt off. Staff subsequently moved him from the TV room and locked him in his cell.

Seclusion

Seclusion was both over-utilized and under-reported at Cheltenham.

Isolation or seclusion induces harmful psychological effects which can damage youth mental health, and there is a lack of evidence demonstrating that seclusion positively changes youth behavior. However, there is research showing that facilities that actively limit the use of isolation are safer, with fewer injuries to youths and staff, and less suicidal behavior and overall violence¹.

DJS policy incorporates the spirit of these research findings in that Departmental policy requires that seclusion can only be utilized as a last resort and only when a youth is presenting an imminent threat to safety to him- or herself or others. Policy also mandates that seclusion must only be for the minimum amount of time necessary for a youth to de-escalate. According to DJS, seclusion is not be used as punishment or to gain compliance, and youth on seclusion must be observed and monitored at regular intervals and must also be visited by medical and mental health professionals.

Despite the Department having set these strict parameters for seclusion use, a culture of using seclusion to manage behavior has developed at Cheltenham and there has been little meaningful oversight by facility supervisors and administrators to ensure the seclusion policy was not being breached and that the protocols around the use of seclusion were being followed appropriately. Such a situation endangers youth safety.

- Video review of seclusion practices during the second quarter of 2024 by the Department's internal investigatory unit, the Office the Inspector General (DJS OIG) found that there were several incidents at Cheltenham where youth were placed in seclusion without appropriate seclusion reporting and/or documentation protocols being followed. For example, in incident 178446, a youth was put in his cell one evening and kept there until 2 pm the following day. This was done without proper authorization and seclusion observation protocols were not followed during the time the youth was locked in his cell.

¹ Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators Toolkit: Reducing the Use of Isolation (2015), available at: <https://dcfs.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/dcfsvgov/content/Programs/JJS/CJCA%20Toolkit%20Reducing%20the%20use%20of%20Isolation.pdf>

- The DJS OIG investigation also found that youth at Cheltenham were kept in locked cells when there were staff shortages at the facility, and these incidents are not recorded as seclusion. This is a breach of DJS policy and is counteractive to safety (and to incident tracking purposes).

Some staff, lacking skills and training on effective methods of responding to problematic youth behavior and frustrated and overwhelmed by the level of violence inside the facility believe they should be able to utilize seclusion routinely to punish and control youth.

- A concerned parent contacted the JJMU to report safety issues involving his young son who was assaulted while on his living unit at CYDC during the second quarter of 2024. The parent reported that, when he came to the facility for a visit, he observed visible injuries on his son including swelling of his face and a bleeding nose. The parent reported that he asked staff at the facility to send his son off-grounds for a medical evaluation. According to the parent, staff informed him that there were no medical staff on duty that could authorize an off-grounds evaluation. He also reported that staff informed him that conditions at the facility were unsafe and that staff attributed a perceived inability to hold kids accountable by keeping kids in isolation (seclusion) for more than four hours as one of the reasons contributing to the lack of safety at the facility. The staffer also allegedly suggested that the parent call outside entities to report conditions at the facility, as the staffer alleged that those who had voiced concern about safety to DJS leadership had their concerns ignored. The parent expressed alarm and concern about his son's welfare and about facility conditions on behalf of his son and the other young people at Cheltenham based on the interaction with the CYDC staffer.²
- In an investigation conducted by the department's internal investigation unit (DJS OIG) regarding a youth's report of being held in his cell without authorization and against DJS policy (Grievance 18784), a recently hired senior manager at Cheltenham expressed to the OIG investigator that, "*she believes that seclusion is not utilized enough at CYDC*".

Physical Restraints and Incident Reviews

In the following incident, a staffer's lack of de-escalation skills resulted in the staffer utilizing an unnecessary and unauthorized restraint which caused injury to a child.

A youth reported to the monitor that staff used inappropriate and excessive force during a restraint in the school earlier on the day of the monitoring visit. The monitor observed that the youth had red marks on his neck while the youth also reported that he had not been seen by medical personnel. The monitor asked CYDC administration to have the youth be medically evaluated right away, and the monitor reported the allegation

² JJMU requested that the initial medical response to the youth's injury and the staffer's alleged comments to the parent be investigated by the DJS OIG. DJS OIG declined to investigate the matter.

of abuse to the Department's internal investigation unit (DJS OIG) and to Child Protective Services (CPS) (Incident 178269).

A nursing evaluation conducted after the youth alleged abuse to the JJMU monitor confirmed bruising on the youth's neck and detailed that the youth also complained of pain in the back of his head. Video review of the restraint (Incident 178266) by DJS OIG showed the youth and a supervisor in a classroom and that the supervisor snatched a piece of paper out of the youth's hands and pushed the youth. Another supervisor arrived on the scene and initiated a restraint of the youth during which he placed his forearm against the youth's neck while the youth was pinned to a desk. The second supervisor then took the youth from the table to the floor (during which the youth reported to the investigator that he hit his head on the flooring). While in a prone position on the floor, the supervisor kept his hand on the neck and throat of the youth. The youth was subsequently handcuffed and placed on seclusion in his cell.

The DJS OIG report on the incident just described noted several violations of policy in regard to 1) laxity in incident reporting protocols; 2) failure to use approved physical restraint technique; 3) misuse of mechanical restraints; 4) failure to utilize any preventative de-escalation technique; and 5) misuse of seclusion.

The Department transferred the staffer primarily involved in the restraint to a girls' facility operated by DJS.

The assistant superintendent noted during a DJS OIG interview (concerning the above-described incident) that he did not think excessive force was used during the incident, while the superintendent of the facility was concerned but acknowledged that he had not reviewed the video footage of the incident until he was interviewed by the DJS OIG (the interview occurred several days after the incident). Although mandated by the Department, there was no shift commander/supervisor review of the restraint incident (including review of the available footage). Supervisory review of footage is mandated because it can clarify events and can enable an informed critique of how well or poorly staff handled a situation. Footage can also be utilized in determining whether decision/actions could have been improved and if more staff training is needed.

A Path Forward

Leadership at Cheltenham and at DJS headquarters are aware that conditions at CYDC need to substantially improve and that staff must adhere to policies and procedures surrounding the use of seclusion. Improvement efforts should be expanded to include oversight of all aspects of facility operations at CYDC, however particular emphasis should be placed on the following:

- ✓ Teaching and mentoring staff on relationship-building, de-escalation and conflict resolution skills, and on instituting restorative practices aimed at reducing the level of violence in the facility;

- ✓ Offering youth opportunities for growth and transformation by routinely and consistently providing a robust and varied program of activities and programs based on youth interests and skills acquisition;
- ✓ Incorporating youth voice, ideas, and feedback to inform expanded facility programming, effective operations and improved daily living conditions; and
- ✓ Fostering continuous constructive partnerships with families and community groups.

The tangible positive effects of devoting time and resources to culture change is reflected in the Department's own efforts to transform the culture at BCJJC, the largest (and most populated) DJS-operated detention center. A capable and experienced facility administrator is working in conjunction with the Department's innovation team (composed of youth, family and community stakeholders and DJS staff) to improve the culture and climate at BCJJC.

The following chart compares incidents numbers at BCJJC (which has a higher ADP than Cheltenham) to CYDC during the second quarter of 2024.

Selected Incident Categories	BCJJC Q2 2024	CYDC Q2 2024
Average Daily Population (ADP)	96	67
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	70	64
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	4	19
3. Physical Restraint	49	88
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	6	11
5. Seclusion	7	61

A positive facility climate with constructive youth-staff relationships at its base can improve safety and lead to better youth outcomes at Cheltenham.

Charles H. Hickey, Jr., School

The Charles H. Hickey, Jr., School (Hickey) in Baltimore County, is a hardware secure (locked and fenced) detention center for boys. Hickey is owned and operated by the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) and has a DJS-rated housing capacity of 72 youth. Black youth accounted for 76% of entries during the second quarter of 2024, a decrease of 5% compared to the same period in 2023. Hispanic/Latino accounted for 9% of entries during the second quarter of this year, up from 7% at the same time in 2023.

Hickey – Selected Incident Categories	Q2 2022	Q2 2023	Q2 2024
Average Daily Population (ADP)	44	57	69
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	32	45	48
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	6	0	3
3. Physical Restraint	45	60	83
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	12	13	8
5. Seclusion	13	20	13
6. Contraband	1	8	10
7. Suicide Ideation	1	1	3
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	0	0	0

The average daily population of youth in Hickey increased by 21% when comparing the second quarter of 2024 with the same time in 2023.

Further comparing the second quarter of 2024 with the same time last year:

- Incidents involving youth-on-youth fighting or assault increased by 7% and physical restraints of youth by staff increased by 38%.

- Incidents involving contraband and reports of suicide ideation also increased.
- Incidents resulting in seclusion fell by 35%, and use of mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) inside the facility decreased by 38%.

Second Quarter - Facility Strengths

- ✓ Administrators at Hickey excel at arranging opportunities for all detained youth to take part in a variety of recreational, enrichment, and family engagement activities. The robust level of programming helps to mitigate incidents arising from too much idle time as well as affording young people constructive outlets to build pro-social skills and competencies.
- ✓ The administrators and staff at the Hickey facility school help prepare many students to take and pass the GED exam.

Second Quarter - Facility Concerns

- Curbing the flow of contraband, particularly suboxone, into DJS facilities (including Hickey) has become increasingly challenging.
- The school at Hickey continues to face teacher shortages which impacts education service delivery.
- The scope of mental health and substance abuse services and level of expertise of service providers available to young people at Hickey is often inadequate, given the complex trauma and mental health-related needs of many of the incarcerated young people.
- Education and direct-care staff need enhanced training and ongoing guidance on building rapport and forming constructive relationships with young people and on maintaining professionalism and appropriate boundaries in their interactions with youth.

Shelter Care

There is a shelter care program for boys and girls on facility grounds but outside the fence of the Hickey detention component. The program started in 2022 and is overseen by DJS administrators from the Hickey detention center. Direct-care staff from the detention facility supervise the youth in the shelter.

Second Quarter - Shelter Strengths

- ✓ Direct-care staff at the shelter provide caring support to the young people placed there.
- ✓ Youth have access to basic kitchen appliances such as toasters, microwaves, and air fryers to make snacks and small meals. Food, hygiene, and clothing supplies are kept well stocked.
- ✓ The Department provides case management and mental health services for young people in the shelter (however, youth needing medical care must be brought to the infirmary inside the Hickey detention component where they are seen by detention facility medical staff).
- ✓ Youth in the shelter are eligible for enrollment in local community schools.

Second Quarter - Shelter Concerns

- Some students have faced delays while attempting to enroll in school and summer school programs. Also, youth from the Hickey shelter tend to be steered into alternative school components of local community schools by Baltimore County authorities.
- A consistent weekly schedule of shelter-specific outings, events, and activities should be created and implemented. The shelter relies on detention center recreation staff to provide enrichment and recreational services instead of developing a separate and specialized schedule of programming for young people in the shelter. Until recently (July of 2024), off-site activities were not being offered. Young people report excessive down time and the feelings of boredom that accompany situations where there is little to do. Community resources should be leveraged in order to offer the children and young people at the shelter opportunities for growth based on their individualized interests and needs.

Thomas J.S. Waxter Children's Center

The Thomas J.S. Waxter Children's Center (Waxter) in Anne Arundel County was a hardware secure (locked and fenced) detention center for girls. Waxter was operated by the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) and had a DJS-rated housing capacity of 32 girls.

The facility, which closed in March of 2022, was aged, cramped and in disrepair. The Department refurbished the Noyes secure detention center in Montgomery County to serve as an all-girls detention facility. Noyes was also an old facility, but the physical plant was in slightly better condition in some respects than the wholly decrepit Waxter center. Girls at Waxter were transferred to Noyes in March of 2022.

In April of 2022, an air conditioner handler unit caught fire at the Noyes facility and the girls were relocated to a unit at the DJS detention center for boys in Cheltenham, Prince George's County (CYDC), until repairs could be made to the Noyes AC unit. The girls were transported back to the Noyes facility at Rockville in June of 2022.

In mid-October of 2022, the Noyes facility for girls was closed again and detained girls awaiting adjudication and multiple staff from Noyes were again transferred to the detention center for boys in Cheltenham as part of a belated measure to bolster critically low staffing levels in Cheltenham.

Detained girls remained at CYDC until October of 2023, when they were moved to the Western Maryland Children's Center (WMCC) located in Hagerstown, Maryland. When capacity is reached at that facility, newly detained girls are taken to Lower Eastern Shore Detention Center in Salisbury. At time of writing (August of 2024), WMCC houses girls and young women in placement and pending placement status, as well as those in detention.

Girls in the juvenile justice system have different medical, reproductive health, mental health, and trauma-related needs than boys. They deserve adequate space, services and a setting that is tailored to meet their circumstances.

Alfred D. Noyes Children's Center

The Alfred D. Noyes Children's Center, located in Montgomery County, was a Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) owned and operated maximum security detention center with a DJS-rated population capacity of 29.

Noyes was temporarily closed in early December of 2021, and boys and girls then housed at Noyes were moved to other DJS detention centers. DJS converted the facility to an all-girls detention center, and girls who would have been housed at the all-girls Waxter detention center in Laurel (which had an aged and deteriorating physical plant) were moved to Noyes on March 1, 2022. Due to both facility conditions at Noyes and staffing issues at the Cheltenham facility, detained girls were displaced several times throughout 2022.

In April of 2022, an air conditioner handler unit caught fire at the Noyes facility and girls were relocated and housed on one unit at Cheltenham Youth Detention Center (CYDC) for boys until repairs could be made to the Noyes AC unit. The girls and young women were transported back to the Noyes facility in June of 2022.

In mid-October of 2022, the Noyes facility was again temporarily shuttered and detained girls and young women awaiting adjudication and many of the staffers from Noyes were transferred to Cheltenham (as part of an effort to boost staffing at CYDC).

Detained girls remained at CYDC until October of 2023, when they were moved to Western Maryland Children's Center (WMCC) located in Hagerstown, Maryland. When capacity is reached at that facility, newly detained girls are taken to Lower Eastern Shore Detention Center in Salisbury. At time of writing (August of 2024), WMCC houses girls and young women in placement and pending placement status as well as those in detention.

The facility at Noyes was staffed by people experienced in working constructively and empathetically with detained girls and young women. The physical plant consisted of several living units, a separate school area, and outdoor space which allowed staff to better manage group dynamics. The location of Noyes in Rockville, Montgomery County, enabled DJS and the education administration at Noyes to leverage local resources to benefit both youth and staff, and the results included enhanced education services.

Girls in the juvenile justice system have different medical, reproductive health, mental health, and trauma-related needs than boys. If the state continues to incarcerate girls³, they deserve adequate space, services and a setting that is tailored to meet their circumstances.

³ Some states and jurisdictions have committed to ending the incarceration of girls by devoting resources to community-based interventions, supports, and programs that can better serve the needs of young people. See Dholakia, Nazish and Rosenthal, Lindsay (October 4, 2022), "Hawai'i is so Close to Ending the Incarceration of Young Girls, Vera Institute of Justice, available at: [Hawai'i Is So Close to Ending the Incarceration of Young Girls | Vera Institute](https://www.vera.org/ending-mass-incarceration/reducing-incarceration/reducing-jail-and-). See also the Vera's Initiative to End Girls' Incarceration, available at: <https://www.vera.org/ending-mass-incarceration/reducing-incarceration/reducing-jail-and->

Lower Eastern Shore Children's Center

The Lower Eastern Shore Children's Center (LESCC) is a hardware secure detention center located in Salisbury. LESCC is owned and operated by the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) and has a DJS-rated housing capacity of 24 youth. Black youth represented 84% of entries during the second quarter of 2024, up from 73% during the same time period last year. Hispanic/Latinx youth accounted for 6% of youth entries in the second quarter of 2024.

LESCC – Selected Incident Categories	Q2 2022	Q2 2023	Q2 2024
Average Daily Population (ADP)	17	19	17
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	10	14	3
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	1	3	4
3. Physical Restraint	31	27	20
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	0	1	0
5. Seclusion	0	3	1
6. Contraband	2	1	1
7. Suicide Ideation	11	1	6
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	1	0	2

The average daily youth population at LESCC was 17 during the second quarter of 2024 versus 19 during the first quarter of 2023. Youth on youth fights and assaults and physical restraints of youth by staff decreased significantly when comparing the two time

[prison-population/ending-girls-incarceration-initiative#:~:text=Vera's%20Initiative%20to%20End%20Girls,juvenile%20legal%20system%20by%202030.](#)

periods. Mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) were not used on youth inside the facility during the quarter, while seclusion was used once during the second quarter of 2024.

LESCC has experienced leadership that models and promotes a therapeutic approach to youth while they are in detention and LESCC administrators and line staff strive to minimize the use of potentially traumatizing practices such as seclusion and mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) on the children and young people held there.

Both boys and girls at LESCC expressed the need for more programming options to help reduce boredom. Girls expressed interest in after-school clubs, cooking lessons, a book club, step dance lessons, and art classes. Girls at LESCC also do not have access to a stylist to do their hair – a service that is available at the WMCC all-girls DJS detention and placement facility (Western Maryland Children's Center in Hagerstown, Maryland.) Boys requested that a greater variety of sports and athletic activities be offered during recreation, rather than just basketball. A newly hired recreation specialist is working with the youth at LESCC on developing ideas for more and more varied activities.

During the reporting period, there were several vacancies for direct-care staff and a vacancy for a case manager that needed to be filled

Western Maryland Children's Center

Western Maryland Children's Center (WMCC), located in Washington County, is a 24-bed maximum security detention and placement center for girls owned and operated by the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department). WMCC consists of three living units – a larger sized unit which contains 12 cells and two smaller living units of six cells each. Black youth represented 80% of total youth entries during the second quarter of 2024 compared to 66% over the same period in 2023. Hispanic/Latina youth accounted for 8% of total youth entries in the second quarter of 2024.

WMCC – Selected Incident Categories	Q2 2022	Q2 2023	Q2 2024
Average Daily Population (ADP)	16	15	21
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	8	20	24
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	2	2	4
3. Physical Restraint	54	37	73
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	12	8	17
5. Seclusion	13	4	8
6. Contraband	0	0	2
7. Suicide Ideation	4	2	10
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	1
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	0	1	6

The average daily population at WMCC increased by 40% in the second quarter of 2024 compared to the second quarter of 2023.

During the same time period, youth on youth incidents involving aggression increased slightly, while physical restraint of youth by staff increased by 97%.

WMCC had the highest rate of facility-based mechanical restraint use on youth of all DJS-operated detention and placement centers during the reporting period. Staff utilization of mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) on youth inside the facility

more than doubled, while reports of suicide ideation and incidents involving seclusion also increased substantially, compared with the same period last year.

The incident tallies noted in the table on the previous page (while significant) may be under-reported, as the facility did not upload incident details to the incident database in accordance with timelines set by DJS policy.

Background Information on WMCC

WMCC was converted to an all-girls detention center in October of 2023 and all detained girls in DJS custody were transferred there. When capacity for detained girls is reached at that facility, newly detained girls are taken to Lower Easter Shore Detention Center in Salisbury.

Unlike for boys in the system, DJS lacks a committed placement facility solely devoted to girls' treatment needs. Instead, and beginning in February of 2024, one living unit within the WMCC detention center has been reserved for girls committed to hardware secure placement.

Second Quarter - Facility Strengths

- ✓ Administrators hold family engagement events on a monthly basis.
- ✓ DJS has begun offering community engagement and off-site activities for girls at WMCC and these efforts should continue and be expanded.
- ✓ Although WMCC is not an appropriate setting in which to house both detained and placed girls and young women, having a smaller-sized facility dedicated to girls' care can present an opportunity to systematically and holistically address the unique medical, reproductive health, mental health, and trauma-related needs of girls in the juvenile justice system. WMCC is a DJS innovation team site, and facilitators began work to transform the facility culture in July of 2024.

Second Quarter - Facility Concerns

- The Department lacked an adequate transition plan for converting the previously all-male WMCC detention center into a combined detention and placement center tailored to the needs of girls - the negative repercussions of a lack of adequate planning, training and staffing have been ongoing.
- The facility continued to be severely understaffed during the second quarter of 2024. Administrators were often required to be in coverage to bolster direct care

staffing and girls were kept locked in cells for extended periods of time because of an inability to maintain adequate staff-to-youth ratios.

- Most staff currently working at WMCC lack experience and expertise in working with a female population, and the one-day training provided to staff about girls in the juvenile justice system was not sufficient to enable a high functioning girls program. Staff at WMCC are often in crisis-mode and burnout levels are high. Staff and youth raise concerns about a lack of structure and consistency at the facility and report chaotic living and working conditions. Incidents numbers are high and serious safety concerns among both staff and youth are prevalent.
- Chronic staffing issues and a lack of staff training contributed to an incident during the reporting period in a situation where law enforcement was called to the facility. Girls on one unit were locked in their cells for the majority of the day over the course of a weekend because of staff shortages. Staff let one of the girls out of her room and she used the unit phone to call 911 and told a dispatcher that there was an active shooter in the facility. The staffer with the girl did not inform the facility administration that the girl had called law enforcement, and an active shooter response team was dispatched to the facility. The arrival of the police surprised both the staff working the front desk area and the supervisor on duty at WMCC as they remained unaware of the girls' call until after the police arrived.
- The Department should hire more mental health clinicians who are experienced in working with adolescent girls to be available on-site, given the high trauma and mental health-related needs of girls in the system, including those incarcerated at WMCC.
- WMCC is far from most of the incarcerated girls' communities and families and many girls have expressed concerns about maintaining family contact while housed at WMCC. The Department should facilitate transportation assistance for families in need of such services so they can attend family engagement events. The Department should also make virtual calls available for youth who have families that cannot (or can only rarely) visit.
- Outdoor green space, classroom space, and office space is limited at WMCC. The Department should move forward with plans to expand classroom and outdoor space at the facility.

COMMITTED PLACEMENT CENTERS

Victor Cullen Center

The Victor Cullen Center (Cullen), in Frederick County, is a hardware secure (locked and fenced) committed placement center owned and operated by the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department). The DJS-rated housing capacity is 27 youth. Black youth represented 71% of total entries during the second quarter of 2024, compared with 77% during the same period in 2023. Hispanic/Latino youth accounted for 13% of total youth entries in the second quarter of 2024.

Victor Cullen – Selected Incident Categories	Q2 2022	Q2 2023	Q2 2024
Average Daily Population (ADP)	13	24	26
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	3	16	11
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	3	7	4
3. Physical Restraint	2	28	20
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	1	9	5
5. Seclusion	0	6	1
6. Contraband	4	4	1
7. Suicide Ideation	0	6	1
8. Suicide Attempt	0	0	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	0	2	0

The average daily population at Cullen increased by 8% when comparing the second quarter of this year with the same time in 2023, while the numbers of incidents involving youth on youth aggression; physical restraint of youth by staff; the use of mechanical restraints (handcuffs and/or leg irons) inside the facility; and reports involving suicide ideation all decreased.

Second Quarter - Facility Strengths

- ✓ Incidents at Cullen were significantly lower than at other DJS placement sites.

- ✓ Vacancies for mental health professionals at Cullen have been partially filled with experienced and dedicated clinicians who have been able to provide much-needed support and services to young people despite having to operate in a corrections-oriented and non-treatment friendly environment.
- ✓ The school staff at Cullen successfully prepares many students to take and pass the GED exam.
- ✓ Victor Cullen is a DJS innovation team site, and work to improve the culture of the facility began at the end of July of 2024.

Second Quarter - Facility Concerns

- The Cullen administration continues to operate under a punitive and correctional (rather than a therapeutic) approach. Youth frequently remark that they would prefer to complete their placement in detention - rather than in the ostensibly treatment-orientated placement at Cullen - because they say they had access to more activities, opportunities, family and community engagement in DJS detention centers than is provided or permitted at the Cullen facility.
- Delays providing youth with appropriate amounts of basic need items such as clothing and hygiene items continued at Cullen during the reporting period.
- There were serious staff and case management shortages during the second quarter of 2024. There are also ongoing vacancies for education staff that have been difficult to fill. Staffing shortages impact the delivery of rehabilitative services. For example, young people enrolled in the off-site work program often miss days of work because of lack of availability of staff escorts. There were also delays in youth receiving earned compensation for work performed.
- The facility administration at Cullen is not invested in creating meaningful opportunities for youth engagement. The designated recreation specialists at Victor Cullen lack initiative in creating a variety of structured programming during recreation time and young people have been stripped of some of the few outlets previously available to keep them occupied. Administration banned from the facility a therapy dog provided by DJS which provided emotional support to young people. Administrators also confiscated movies and access to DVD players which youth previously had access to during downtime and without replacing these passive avenues to occupy time with more structured and

meaningful programming. Youth now must earn the right to these items if they want to reduce boredom. MP3 players, which were previously provided as a coping mechanism for young people, were taken away from all youth (including from youth who exhibited behavioral compliance with facility rules concerning their use). Additionally, a popular activity that allowed youth to ride bikes on a regular basis at the facility was not initiated in a timely manner despite repeated requests to get the activity up and running.

- Staff at the Victor Cullen facility need more effective training on how to build rapport and form and maintain positive relationships with youth.

Garrett Children's Center (formerly Savage Mountain Youth Center)

The Garrett Children's Center (GCC/Garrett), located in rural Garrett County, is a Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) owned and operated hardware secure (locked and fenced) committed placement center for boys with a DJS-rated capacity of 24.

Garrett was fully operational for approximately two years (from December of 2018 to December of 2020) before it closed to youth in 2021, following a COVID-19 outbreak at the facility. Some staff continue to report to the site, including teachers who provide online courses used to mitigate vacancies for certified teachers in core content areas at other DJS placement and detention facilities around the state.

Youth Centers x2

The youth centers, located in remote western Maryland, consist of two separate staff secure (not fenced and locked) facilities for boys. Both centers are owned and operated by the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department). The facilities are Green Ridge (30-youth capacity) and Backbone Mountain (28-youth capacity). Black youth represented 79% of total youth entries to the youth centers during the second quarter of 2024 compared to 80% of entries during the same period in 2023. Hispanic/Latino youth represented 11% of entries to the youth centers during the current reporting period compared to 9% in the second quarter of 2023.

Combined Youth Centers (x2) – Selected Incident Categories	Q2 2022	Q2 2023	Q2 2024
Average Daily Population (ADP)	34	53	54
1. Youth on Youth Assault/Fight	20	21	38
2. Alleged Youth on Staff Assault	3	8	21
3. Physical Restraint	45	123	142
4. Use of Handcuffs and/or Shackles	1	28	21
5. Seclusion	0	0	0
6. Contraband	3	5	8
7. Suicide Ideation	3	5	28
8. Suicide Attempt	0	1	0
9. Self-Injurious Behavior	0	0	0

The average daily population at the youth centers increased slightly (from 53 to 54) when comparing the second quarter of 2024 to the second quarter of 2023. Continuing the comparison between the two time periods:

- The number of incidents involving youth fights and assaults, alleged youth on staff assaults, physical restraints of youth by staff, and instances of suicide ideation all increased.

- The use of mechanical restraints on youth inside the facilities decreased by 25%.

Second Quarter - Strengths

- ✓ There has been a concerted effort to increase off-site programming options and educational field trips for the young people at the youth centers. Opportunities for off-grounds activities should be further expanded and robust on-site recreation and enrichment programming should also be instituted and maintained.

Second Quarter - Concerns

- The number of incidents (especially those involving physical restraint of youth by staff) remains high at the youth centers.
- The vast majority of youth-on-youth incidents involving aggression (29) and also of situations where physical restraints of youth were initiated by staff (88) occurred at the Green Ridge facility. Youth at Green Ridge frequently voice concerns about facility culture and describe antagonistic relationships between youth and staff; an overly punitive approach focused on control and compliance; a lack of consistency among staff in their approach to youth behavior including the issuance of disciplinary reports (which can result in an extension of youth stay at the facility); and staff failing to pay enough attention to meeting the basic hygiene and clothing needs of youth.
- Many youth report they had access to more programs and services and a higher level of care while stuck in DJS detention centers awaiting placement. Youth frequently remark that they would prefer to return to detention to complete their placement time there.
- The youth centers do not have the necessary level of resources, including qualified mental health clinicians, to address youth needs. Most of the incident reports noting suicide ideation (24) issued from Green Ridge, yet the facility lacks graduate level licensed mental health professionals working fulltime on-site to provide treatment. There are currently two associate degree-level substance abuse counselors (CSC-AD) on-site who the DJS mental health director has approved to provide individual and family counseling to the incarcerated young people. Both Green Ridge and Backbone Mountain Youth Center had three vacancies for mental health clinicians during the second quarter of 2024, and both facilities lacked a full-time on-site behavioral health supervisor. The

Department should focus on recruiting or contracting and retaining highly qualified mental health clinicians for all DJS placement sites.

- Retention of experienced line staff has also been an ongoing challenge and many direct-care staff currently at the youth centers have two or less years of experience. New staffers have generally struggled to form constructive relationships with youth as the DJS training program is heavily focused on crisis intervention techniques (such as the utilization of restraints) rather than on teaching incoming staff how to foster relational skills which can help staff to build rapport with youth.
- Opportunities to link youth to in-demand trade skills and disciplines (barbering, welding, carpentry, HVAC certification, mechanics, etc.) and employment and internships in high demand fields should be substantially expanded.
- The youth centers are located far from the families and homes of almost all the young people placed there and incarcerated youth at the centers frequently comment that they would like more interaction with individuals and organizations that are more representative of their communities and cultural background.

Silver Oak Academy

Silver Oak Academy (SOA/Silver Oak), located in Carroll County, is a privately-operated staff secure (not locked and fenced) committed placement center licensed by the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS/the Department) to house up to 96 boys.

Due to concerns about youth safety in the program, staff supervision issues, and problems within the education department at Silver Oak, all residential youth placed through DJS were removed from the program in May of 2022, and new admissions to the program through DJS have halted.

SMALLER FACILITY UPDATES

SMALLER FACILITY UPDATES

Morning Star Youth Academy

Morning Star Youth Academy is a staff secure (not locked or fenced) committed placement center on Maryland's eastern shore. The facility is operated by VisionQuest, Inc., and the residential component of the program can accept up to eight youth through DJS, which licenses Morning Star. In addition to residential services, Morning Star-VisionQuest also operates an alternative day school on-grounds serving students from the surrounding county (Dorchester County). Residential and day students are kept separated on the campus.

Morning Star utilizes the trauma-informed Sanctuary model. Therapeutic services are provided onsite, and treatment services are supplemented by clinicians from community mental health services organizations. Youth at Morning Star participate in on- and off-site recreational activities and volunteer in the surrounding community. A limited number of youth also work in nearby businesses.

Morning Star lacks trained dietary staff and relies on residential staff to make meals. Youth report that the quality of food is poor, and they often feel hungry. The facility is attempting to recruit a fulltime, professional cook.

Excessive downtime continues to be a concern and youth report spending much of their time sitting on the living unit. Their boredom is exacerbated during hot weather as there are few climate-controlled areas at the facility where youth can engage in recreation. The on-site swimming pool which provided a recreational activity during the summer needs extensive repairs and will not be in operation for the foreseeable future. There are plans to visit a swimming pool in a nearby community. The onsite weight room does not have air conditioning or heating installed, so the resource cannot be used comfortably during the summer and winter months. Additionally, the floor in the gym is slippery and becomes hazardous when condensation is present. Administrators should expand the scope and availability of activities and incorporate youth voice in recreation planning.

Youth staying at Morning Star are allotted three 10-minute phone calls to their families each week. Families can visit young people placed at the facility every other week. In contrast, youth in DJS-operated detention and placement centers are allotted seven phone calls each week, and families can visit any day of the week as long as advance notice is given. The families of most youth in residence at Morning Star live far from the facility, and the young people there frequently request more phone calls home and also want access to virtual calls so as to be able see their family members. Morning Star should accommodate these requests and incorporate more opportunities for family contact into the treatment program as increased family contact has been associated with positive behavioral and academic outcomes among incarcerated young people.

One Love Group Home

One Love Group Home (One Love) is an 8-bed group home in Baltimore City operated by Building Communities Today for Tomorrow, Inc. The home is licensed by and receives referrals from the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) and also began receiving referrals to house youth involved with the Maryland Department of Human Resources beginning in the second quarter of 2022. One Love partners with community-based organizations to provide therapy, education, employment, and enrichment opportunities for youth while they reside in a home-like environment. Students are enrolled in local schools where they work toward completing high school. Due to the nature of the program, One Love is best suited for older youth who are preparing for independent living.

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE SERVICES – RESPONSE



**DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE SERVICES
RESPONSE TO JJMU 2024 SECOND QUARTER REPORT**

DJS appreciates the opportunity to respond to the feedback shared in JJMU's Second Quarter FY '24 Report ("the Report").

The Department of Juvenile Services ("DJS" or "the Department") acknowledges the continued need for improvement raised in the Report and is working to address issues identified by the JJMU and more broadly.

Rather than a point-by-point response and consistent with our recent practice DJS is providing general comments including an update on DJS' work to improve conditions in its residential facilities.

Update on DJS efforts to improve conditions and programming:

During the third quarter of 2024 the DJS Facilities Reform Innovation Team has been working to establish and support the facility-based teams in BCJJC, WMCC, and VCC. Obtaining resources to support implementation at WMCC freed up capacity to allow for the Innovation Team to initiate work at Victor Cullen. Within its multidisciplinary, cross-cutting site-based innovation teams, DJS has instituted a rolling application process for young people to ensure regular and consistent youth representation.

As the facility-based teams take root and unique Work Plans are developed for each site, the team has begun to organize and communicate its implementation work under three focus areas:

Culture - building and strengthening a sense of community by improving communication and collaboration and creating opportunities for relationship and trust building;

Climate - supporting staff and young people through policy and practice change, where they have a role in crafting the new approach; and

Environment - changing the physical space so it is more safe-feeling, comfortable, and normalized.

Additionally, the Innovation Team is implementing a both/and strategy by managing two parallel implementation tracks: (1) a more intensive “unit by unit” approach creating an off-site community and skill-building training experience, followed by on-the-job support, training and coaching, for one unit at a time, and (2) a broader implementation plan for the full facility (including, for example, communication, staff morale and staffing stability, cosmetic upgrades, etc.).

BCJJC:

The first unit for the “unit by unit” approach was identified (unit 21 on D-Pod) and the team delivered its first day and a half off-site training experience for the staff from that unit. On-the-job training and ongoing support and technical assistance to this unit is underway. Training for the remaining units on D-Pod will occur during Q4, with the vision of demonstrating on D-Pod how a full Pod can operate differently. In terms of full-facility efforts underway: increased communication and collaboration with RA middle management staff; collaboration with education and integrating circle work into the start of each class to help improve expectations, roles and relationships between teachers, RAs, and students; and project planning for the rollout of cosmetic changes to the building, starting with pending placement and shifting to unit 21 and D-Pod next.

WMCC:

Youth focus groups have been completed, including 16 Positive Youth Development (anonymous and voluntary) surveys. Staff focus groups will be conducted in early Q4 once more permanent staff have returned. Additionally, a collaborative design process for new murals in WMCC has begun. With feedback from the Innovation Team, along with broader staff and youth input, two new murals are being painted in the main hallway. Youth were involved in creating the design and they are now involved in painting; and through collaboration with JSEP, an arts-integration approach to the curriculum and lesson planning will be employed so youth can engage in painting during the school day. This partnership is intended to serve as a model for collaboration with JSEP at the other two sites.

VCC:

Staff and youth focus groups were recently completed, and analysis is underway. Immediate next steps include: solidifying the Implementation Team and determining the meeting cadence, using the focus group findings and analysis to inform Work Plan development, and organizing a focus group “*Thank You*” event that will signify the official launch of the team’s work by creating an opportunity to communicate the vision and goals.

Finally, the team’s capacity is being expanded to support the both/and implementation strategy across all three sites by adding staff in Q4 to support the work.

Additional work during this Quarter included:

- Continuing to improve services at BCJJC’s and CYDC’s pending placement units, with smoother transition experiences for the youth that leave pending placement units and enter into treatment facilities, particularly in the accumulation of treatment hours, which are assigned based on risk assessments.
- Improving the Department’s approach to reducing introduction of contraband into facilities, by utilizing a multi-layered approach updates to agency practices, including utilizing seasoned and well-trained staff at entry points, having leadership do random contraband checks, and utilizing both overt and covert methods of detection and prevention.
- The Department has increased our overall behavioral health and nurse staffing and has implemented new measures to closely monitor our contracted providers.
- The Department has worked to improve performance in its contracts with Hope Health Services to provide primary behavioral health services at three of the agency’s detention centers, CHHS, BCJJC and CYDC. In particular, Hope Health has increased its coordination of mental health continuation of care by having clinicians who provide treatment in DJS detention centers meet with clinicians in DJS treatment centers to ensure a cohesive transition.

DJS is also pleased to share the following incident and population related data, collected by DJS' Office of Research and Evaluation. Note that DJS believes critical incident rates will improve over time as the work of the agency's Facility Innovation Teams progresses.

DJS prefers to examine and analyze incidents by calculating the rate of incidents per 100 youth days. This is a standard method of measuring a rate of incidents allowing for meaningful comparison between facilities of different populations and changes to a facility population over time. DJS finds this method to be more useful than looking simply at a count of incidents that does not truly allow for comparison across time or among facilities due to changes.

Likewise, DJS notes that it is important to look at trends over longer times, however, DJS populations and programming often change considerably so it may be more meaningful to compare the current quarter to the one just prior in order to allow for a more direct comparison. Since both short-term and long-term trends are useful for different purposes, both are presented below.

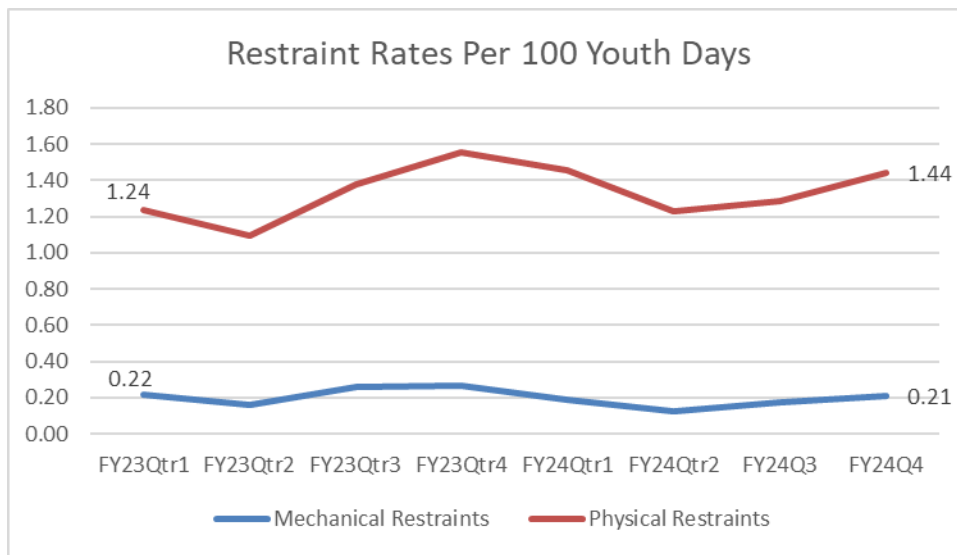
The table below presents the past two quarters of data, showing incident counts and *rates* for detention, committed treatment programs, total state-operated programs, and a breakdown by facility. Discussions of the past two years are added below to present a more complete picture of incidents.

Key Incident Counts and Rates for the Past Two Quarters at DJS Programs

	Mechanical Restraints		Physical Restraints		Seclusions		Youth Fights		Yth on Yth Assaults	
	FY24 Q3	FY24 Q4	FY24 Q3	FY24 Q4	FY24 Q3	FY24 Q4	FY24 Q3	FY24 Q4	FY24 Q3	FY24 Q4
Detention										
Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Ctr Detention	6	6	49	49	3	7	12	8	66	62
Rate Per 100 Youth Days	0.07	0.07	0.55	0.57	0.03	0.08	0.14	0.09	0.75	0.72
Charles Hickey School	18	8	81	83	20	13	0	16	38	32
Rate Per 100 Youth Days	0.29	0.13	1.31	1.32	0.32	0.21	0.00	0.26	0.62	0.51
Cheltenham Youth Detention Center	5	11	76	88	32	60	21	19	45	45
Rate Per 100 Youth Days	0.08	0.18	1.23	1.43	0.52	0.98	0.34	0.31	0.73	0.73
Lower Eastern Shore Children's Center	0	0	25	19	0	1	4	3	6	0
Rate Per 100 Youth Days	0.00	0.00	1.54	1.19	0.00	0.06	0.25	0.19	0.37	0.00
Western Maryland Children's Center	10	14	52	50	3	8	9	9	7	8
Rate Per 100 Youth Days	0.57	1.03	2.99	3.69	0.17	0.59	0.52	0.66	0.40	0.59
Total Detention Incident Count	39	39	283	289	58	89	46	55	162	147
Detention Rate Per 100 Youth Days	0.16	0.16	1.15	1.21	0.24	0.37	0.19	0.23	0.66	0.61
Committed Programs										
Backbone Mountain Youth Center	9	12	37	54	N/A	N/A	4	6	7	3
Rate Per 100 Youth Days	0.39	0.51	1.61	2.31	N/A	N/A	0.17	0.26	0.31	0.13
Green Ridge Youth Center	3	9	72	88	N/A	N/A	12	13	23	16
Rate Per 100 Youth Days	0.14	0.35	3.26	3.43	N/A	N/A	0.54	0.51	1.04	0.62
Victor Cullen Center	4	5	13	19	2	2	4	4	7	7
Rate Per 100 Youth Days	0.17	0.22	0.55	0.83	0.08	0.09	0.17	0.17	0.29	0.30
Total Committed Incident Count	16	26	122	161	2	2	20	23	37	26
Committed Rate Per 100 Youth Days	0.23	0.36	1.77	2.24	0.03	0.03	0.29	0.32	0.54	0.36
Total (Detention & Committed)										
Total Incident Count	55	65	405	450	60	91	66	78	199	173
Rate Per 100 Youth Days	0.17	0.21	1.29	1.44	0.19	0.29	0.21	0.25	0.63	0.56

Data and Trends by Quarter

Restraints



Looking over the longer term of two years:

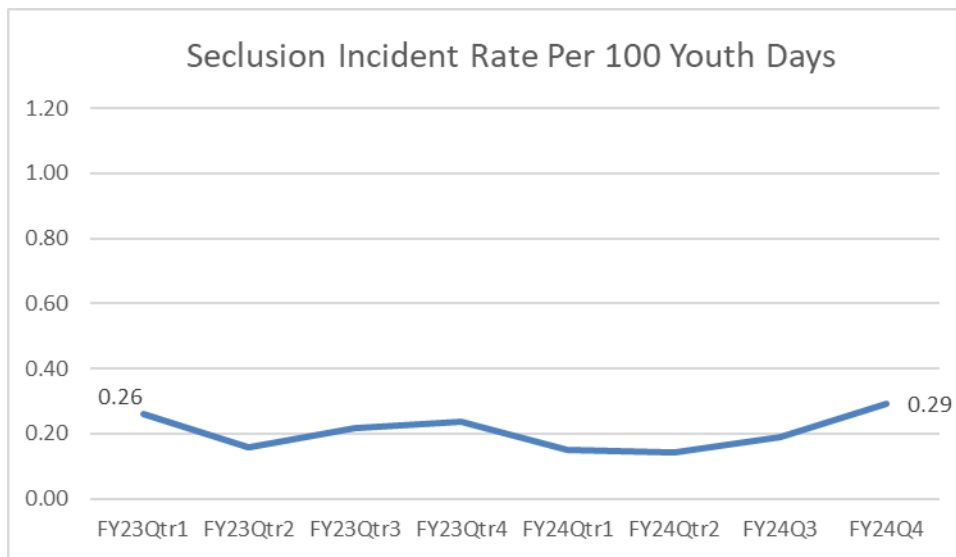
- Mechanical restraints remain consistently less common than physical restraints and the rates have varied very little over this time period.
- Rates for physical restraints have fluctuated more and saw an overall increase.

Over the last two quarters where populations would be more comparable:

- Mechanical Restraints
 - Statewide overall rates have increased.
 - The overall rate per 100 youth days remained the same for detention programs while the overall rate increased in the committed treatment programs.
 - Detention Programs: BCJJC and LESCC each remained the same (LESCC was 0.0 for both quarters); the rate at Hickey decreased; rates at CYDC and WMCC increased.
 - The rate per 100 youth days increased in each of the committed treatment programs.

- Physical Restraints
 - o Statewide overall rates increased
 - o The overall rate per 100 youth days increased for both detention programs and committed treatment programs.
 - The only facility that saw a decrease in the rate of physical restraints per 100 youth days was LESCC.

Seclusions

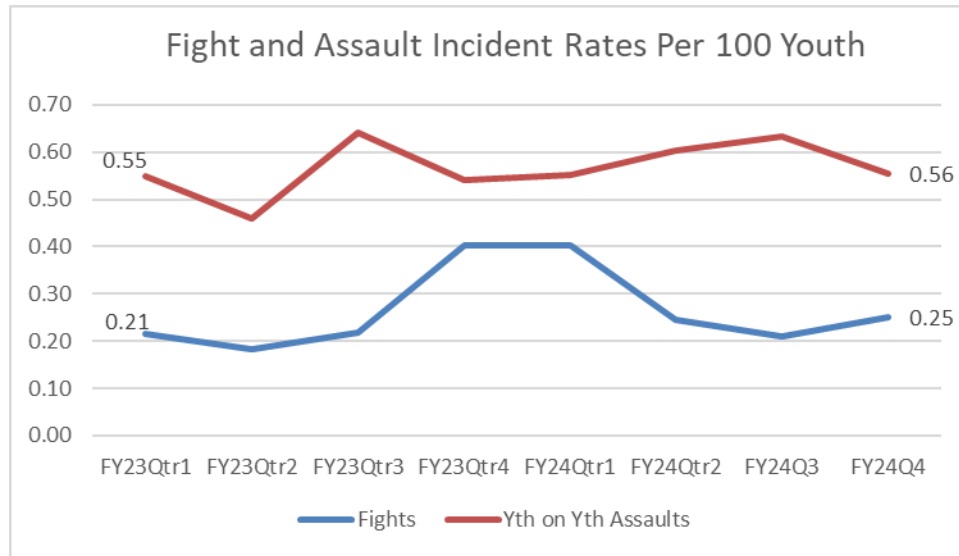


The use of seclusion is uncommon overall and has been relatively flat over the past two years with an uptick over the last three quarters. Fluctuations in rates over time are primarily attributable to detention facilities.

In the last two quarters, it should be noted that each detention facility saw an increase in incident rates for seclusion with the exception of Hickey which decreased from 0.32 to 0.21.

Also important to note is that VCC is the only committed treatment program to report any incidents of seclusion over the two years shown. During this time period, there were three quarters during which VCC also reported 0 seclusions.

Fights and Youth on Youth Assaults:



Looking by quarter over the two year period for statewide (detention and treatment programs):

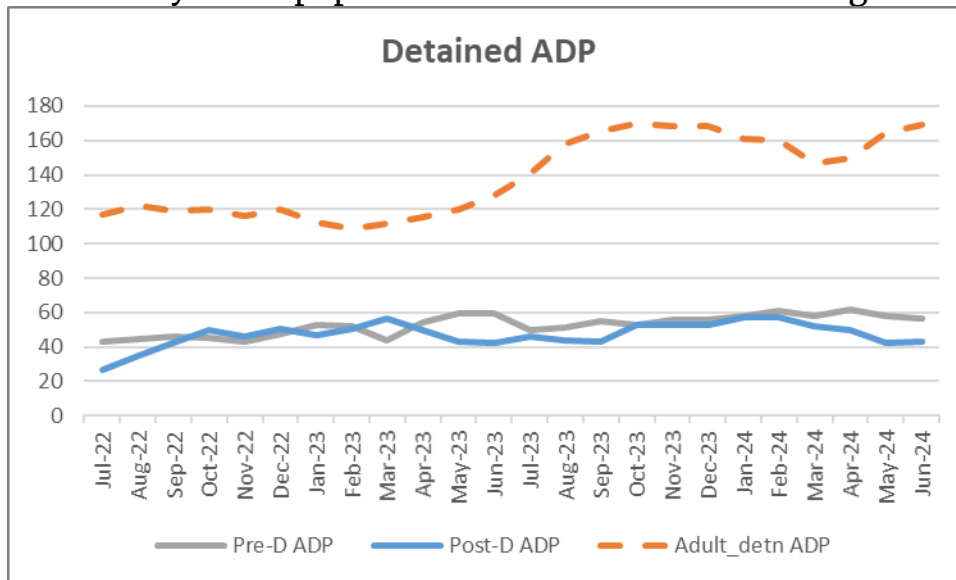
- The rate of fight incidents remains consistently lower than the rate of assault incidents.
- Overall increases were seen in incident rates per 100 youth days for both fights and assaults.

Over the last two quarters:

- Fights
 - Statewide overall rates increased
 - Rates have increased overall in detention and treatment programs.
 - A few individual facilities saw exceptions to the overall increase in rates. Rate per 100 youth days decreased at: BCJJC, Cheltenham, Lower Eastern Shore, and Green Ridge. Rates at Victor Cullen remained the same.
- Youth on Youth Assaults
 - Statewide overall rates decreased
 - Rates have decreased overall in detention and treatment programs.
 - A few individual facilities saw exceptions to the overall decrease in rates. Rates per 100 youth days increased at: WMCC and Victor Cullen. Rates at Cheltenham remained the same.

Population Data

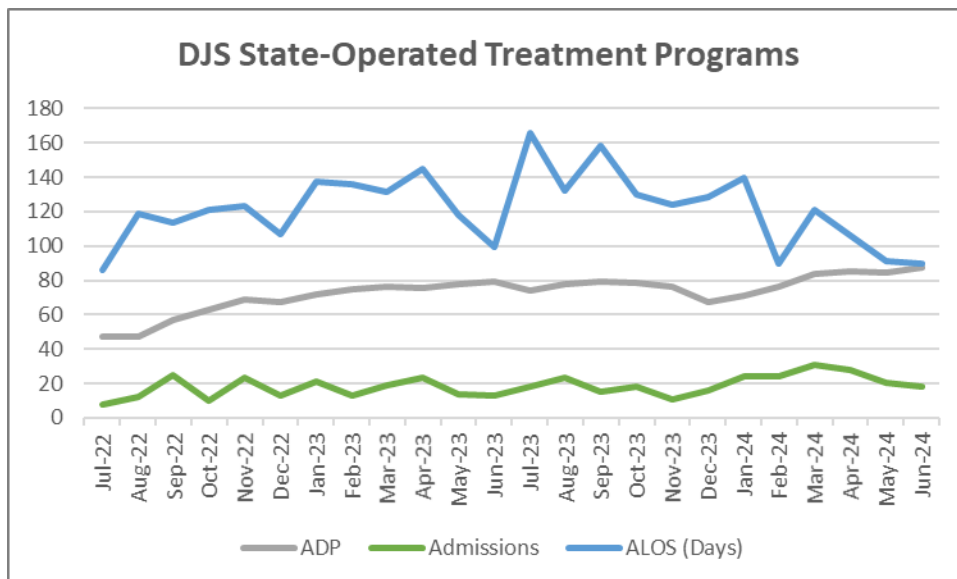
A summary of the population data shows the following:



By examining the last two years of population data, it is evident that the rise in the overall detention average daily population (ADP) is heavily impacted by the adult hold ADP. ADP for this group is consistently higher than the other groups and continues to increase overall. Post-D and Pre-D ADP have also both increased over the span of the two years shown.

Between July 2022 and June 2024:

- ADP for the adult population increased 45.0%
- Post-D ADP increased 59.6%
- Pre-Disposition ADP increased 32.4%.



ALOS has increased overall during the two-year period shown but has been decreasing monthly since March 2024. Admissions and ADP have both seen an overall increase since July 2022.

- ALOS has decreased overall over the two-year period though it did vary during this span. It was near its 2-year low in February 2024 before increasing in March 2024.
- Admissions have seen an overall increase since their low in July 2022 and a similar uptick during the last two months.
- ADP has increased over the two-year span reaching its highest point in June 2024.

The Department will further review JJMU's 2024 2nd Quarter report to integrate into DJS' work plans.

Please accept this as the Department's response to your First Quarter monitoring report and do not hesitate to contact Marc Schindler, Assistant Secretary & Chief of Staff, if you have any questions.

JUVENILE SERVICES EDUCATION PROGRAM (JSEP) – RESPONSE

JSEP Response to JJMU Report 2024 Second Quarter

JSEP appreciates the opportunity to respond to the 2024 second-quarter Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit (JJMU) report.

Vacancies

The JJMU report highlights JSEP's continued challenges with school staff vacancies. However, JSEP has made progress, reducing vacancies by 30% between September 2023 and September 2024. In September 2023, the school-based vacancy rate was 20%, but it has since decreased to 14% statewide. JSEP is grateful for the support of our DJS partners in HR for helping achieve this decrease. Nevertheless, regional disparities persist, with our western schools fully staffed and enjoying staff longevity, while larger schools in the Baltimore area face vacancy rates as high as 30% (e.g., BCJJC). JSEP and the JSEP Board are working on both legislative and non-legislative solutions to address these shortages as well as regional differences. The JJMU report noted the rising number of students in facilities, especially in the Baltimore area, further emphasizing the urgency of addressing staff shortages.

Mental Health

JSEP has successfully added another school psychologist, bringing the total to three, and has hired one school social worker. The vacant social worker position will primarily serve the western schools, particularly WMCC, where the need for enhanced mental health services is most acute. Due to space limitations at WMCC, this itinerant position will be housed at Cullen.

GED and Traditional Graduates

JJMU noted the increase in GED completions. This increase was accompanied by an increase in the number of students graduating from their LEAs while attending a JSEP school. Between FY23 and FY24, the number of GEDs earned increased by 64%, from 25 to 41. Traditional graduations saw a 177% increase, rising from 9 to 22. Overall, the graduation rate for JSEP students rose by 94% between FY23 and FY24, and JSEP is committed to continuing this progress.

Enhanced Programming

Both students and staff enjoyed and benefitted from the afterschool and weekend clubs initiated in fall 2023. These programs were paused for the renegotiation of the agreement, which is pending approval from Department of Budget and Management. JSEP is optimistic that the club programs will soon be reinstated across all facilities.

Western Maryland Children's Center

JSEP acknowledges the unique challenges faced by the female population at WMCC, who are among JSEP's most trauma-affected students. JSEP is committed to having an itinerant school social worker spend substantial time at WMCC to support these students. A teaching position has also been added to the staff to better serve the distinct educational needs of both detention and treatment populations. To address the lack of library space and the two-book restriction at WMCC,

the book buggy is visiting more frequently. JSEP is also in the process of procuring reading tablets that will personalize the student's leisure reading experience and provide access to a larger number of reading material. JSEP is also dedicated to offering a variety of clubs tailored to the interests of the girls at WMCC once the programs can resume.

Parent Engagement

Students with engaged parents are more likely to achieve higher grades, perform better on standardized tests, and generally show stronger academic skills. JSEP has made a concerted effort over the past year to make parent engagement a priority. JSEP has begun providing parents access to their child's grades in our student information system. All JSEP schools have begun hosting quarterly parent engagement activities and the JSEP Parent and Student Handbook is being distributed to all of our parents. Engaged parents create a support system that helps ensure their child's success both in and out of school, contributing to well-rounded personal and academic development.