



ADOLFO GONZALES
Chief Probation Officer

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES PROBATION DEPARTMENT

ADULT & JUVENILE SERVICES
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June 7, 2022

Board of State and Community Corrections
Ms. Linda Penner, Chair
2590 Venture Oaks Way, Suite 200
Sacramento, CA 95833

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES PROBATION DEPARTMENT – CENTRAL JUVENILE HALL (CJH) and BARRY J. NIDORF JUVENILE HALL (BJNJH)

Dear Ms. Penner,

The Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) conducted inspections for the county's juvenile facilities in September, October, and November 2021. On November 15, 2021, the BSCC provided written notice to the Department regarding non-compliance with **Title 15, Section 1354.5 (Room Confinement) at both BJNJH and CJH** and **Title 15, Section 1328 (Safety Checks) at CJH**. The Department submitted a corrective action plan (CAP) on December 10, 2021.

CENTRAL JUVENILE HALL

The BSCC conducted a site visit and inspection at CJH on February 3, 2022. During this site visit, the BSCC identified the following new items of non-compliance:

- Title 15, Section 1354.5 – Room Confinement**
- Title 15, Section 1371 – Programs, Recreation, and Exercise**

The BSCC provided a written Notice of Non-compliance regarding these two items on February 8, 2022. Since these new findings, involving only one youth, were similar to those addressed in the Department's December 10, 2021 CAP, the BSCC advised that these new findings would be added to the existing CAP process.

On March 10, 2022, the Department submitted a CAP which outlined a plan to further address systemic challenges and make sustainable enhancements to ensure compliance with Title 15 Regulations by temporarily suspending the operations at CJH for ninety (90) days to assist in facilitating leadership changes, training for staff and needed repairs to the facility. This brief suspension of operations included moving youth to BJNJH to accomplish these changes and enhancements. During the temporary suspension, the Department maintained an Intake Unit for law enforcement agencies to book youth into custody, a

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Medical Unit to provide medical screening clearances and services, and a Court holding area for youth appearing at the Eastlake Juvenile Court facility at CJH. Youth were transferred from CJH to BJNJH on March 12 and 13, 2022. No youth were housed at CJH during the temporary suspension of operations. Facility repairs and staffing changes were made and youth were subsequently returned to CJH in phases between May 18 and 25, 2022.

Pursuant to the May 16, 2022 letter from the BSCC, a preliminary reinspection of CJH was conducted on May 23, 2022 with a follow up reinspection conducted after the facility was occupied at population levels similar to those prior to the transfer of youth to BJNJH.

During the temporary suspension of operations, approximately \$5.5 million dollars in repairs and renovations were made at CJH to ensure a safe environment. Further, the newly assigned Superintendents, all Directors and Supervisors received training specific to Title 15 Regulations. Training was and continues to occur in staff meetings and training, coaching, and mentoring of line staff is on-going. Both video and written documentation continues to be reviewed and staff are receiving immediate feedback from their Directors and Supervisors, as appropriate. Since the return to CJH, visiting, outdoor recreation and religious services have occurred on a regular basis. Additionally, mental health services and other Cognitive Behavior Intervention programming has been provided. As a result, the Department contends that the two items of noncompliance related to Room Confinement and Programs, Recreation and Exercise have been remedied.

As identified during the BSCC reinspection, Safety Checks continue to be an area of non-compliance at CJH. Immediate action has been taken to address this issue. An Instructional Memorandum and a revised Safety Check sheet has been issued to staff to reinforce compliance with this regulation and to address how to document missed safety checks. Further, the Department is in the process of procuring technology that will enhance our ability to conduct and accurately document safety checks.

While the Department has demonstrated a drastic improvement in gaining compliance with Section 1328 (Safety Checks), our staffing levels have negatively impacted our ability to sustain consistency in this area. Due to the number of staff off work due to injuries and/or leaves, coupled with the significant volume of staff call-outs happening on a daily basis, the Department has been forced to hold-over staff for mandatory overtime and deploy field staff into our juvenile halls to meet staffing ratios. While this serves to meet minimum staffing requirements, it creates inconsistency within the institutions which directly impacts both youth and staff. Probation has requested assistance from the County's Department of Human Services (DHR) to address these staffing challenges, which includes support in obtaining and sustaining appropriate staffing levels.

BARRY J. NIDORF JUVENILE HALL

Beginning March 14, 2022, the BSCC began to review and inspect BJNJH to determine compliance with the Department's CAP. The Department was notified by the BSCC on March 29, 2022, that following their inspection it appeared that BJNJH remained out of compliance with **Section 1354.5 Room Confinement**.

The BSCC's March 29, 2022 findings specifically focused on violations of the Department's policy that youth may be placed in their rooms as necessary for shift change, but for "no more than 30 minutes at the end of the AM shift and beginning of the PM shift." The BSCC stated that the inspections revealed instances that the 30-minute time limits were exceeded.

The Department took steps to address this issue even before the BSCC issued its findings on March 29, 2022. On March 26, 2022, staff were instructed to refrain from placing youth in their rooms during shift change, except in instances of unit disturbances and/or fights or at the direction of the Officer of the Day or the Director. On April 7, 2022, the BSCC Board voted to continue the Determination of Suitability for BJNJH from the April 7, 2022 Board Meeting to the June 9, 2022 Board Meeting and directed BSCC staff to conduct a further reinspection to determine compliance. The actions taken to ensure that room confinement at shift change, as outlined in the March 29, 2022 notice from the BSCC, have proven to be effective. As a result, this item of non-compliance has been remedied.

The Department has made tremendous strides toward gaining and sustaining compliance with Title 15 Regulations at both BJN and CJH. Newly appointed Superintendents and Directors began their assignments, effective April 11, 2022. As previously indicated, these new leadership teams are committed to ensure that the Department maintains its focus on Title 15 Regulations, and generally continue the Department's efforts to ensure the Juvenile Halls are run professionally and in full compliance with the law.

The Department takes its compliance obligations seriously, as demonstrated by the significant progress we have made. The Department is committed to ensuring and maintaining this compliance going forward. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office or Chief Deputy Karen Fletcher at (562) 441-8043.

Sincerely,



Dr. Adolfo Gonzales
Chief Probation Officer

LA County Response

June 7, 2022

Page 4 of 4

cc:

Fesia Davenport, Chief Executive Officer, Los Angeles County
Honorable Eric C. Taylor, Presiding Judge Los Angeles County Superior Court
Honorable Akemi Arakaki, Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court
Celia Zavala, Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Dawyn Harrison, Interim County Counsel, Los Angeles County
Wendelyn Julien, Executive Director, Probation Oversight Commission