

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES  
FY 2017 PATUXENT INSTITUTION**

**Vacancies**

**Issue:** The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services should comment on the effect the high vacancy rate has had on its ability to carry out its mission, as well as the plan to fill vacant positions.

**Response:** The Department intends to fill all vacancies in accordance with budgeted turnover requirements. It should be noted that current vacancies typically have a lower salary than the average salary across the Department. Since these vacancies carry a lower salary than the Departmental average, the Department is obligated to carry a higher number of vacancies than what is required in order to meet the value amount of the Department's budgeted turnover rate.

However, ensuring continuous fulfillment of the appropriate number of vacant positions is a priority for the Department. The Department recognizes the potential negative impact of carrying more vacancies than what is necessary to meet the value amount of the Department's budgeted turnover rate in terms of overtime reliance and the impact on operations. To address these vacancies, the Department has taken the following steps:

- In late September of 2015, the Department reorganized its Human Resources Services Division (HRSD) without losing any employees. The reorganization centralized recruitment and created uniformity in the recruitment processes. Since the reorganization, agency recruitments have increased from 23 to 90, representing an increase of almost 400 percent.
- The Department created a Recruitment Unit – staffed with three professional recruiters – that will be fully operational by the end of February 2016. The Department has established a recruitment plan to address all phases of recruitment within the organization. Specifically, the plan focuses on Correctional Officer positions and technical positions that are typically challenging to fill. The Department has also partnered with colleges that offer Criminal Justice and Correctional programs or other programs such as psychology, nursing, etc. In addition to partnering with higher education institutions, the Department has established a relationship with the military, veterans groups and retired military veterans associations in hopes of tapping into this great pool of talent.
- The Department is currently in the process of implementing a new, validated test for Correctional Officer recruitments that reduces the testing time from approximately five and a half (5.5) hours to two (2) hours.

## **Population Trends**

**Issue:** The Patuxent Institution should comment on whether recent changes to the flagship programs have affected remediation efforts or the size of the offender population served.

**Response:** The Institution monitors the population trends at Patuxent, particularly as they relate to treatment services.

Over the past several years, there has been a decrease in the number of inmates enrolled in the Eligible Person (EP) and Patuxent Youth (PY) Programs at any given point in time. However, the changes that have led to this decrease in static enrollment in Patuxent Institution's flagship programs will actually improve remediation efforts and lead to an increase in the size of the offender population that will be served over time.

Historically, Patuxent Institution utilized a treatment model in which services were largely delivered in the context of a process-oriented, weekly therapy group. While this model was effective and state-of-the-art when it was initially developed, Patuxent has always seen fit to further refine and develop its treatment model in order to deliver therapeutic services that are in accordance with best practices. As such, treatment is now based upon a cognitive-behavioral treatment model that places offenders into multiple, discrete therapy modules to address their treatment needs and risk factors for re-offense. This model is much more staff-intensive in that services are delivered more frequently in a discrete period of time. As such, it has led to a decrease in the number of offenders who can be serviced at any given point in time.

Despite the fact that the number of offenders who are enrolled in the EP and PY Programs at any static point in time has decreased, it is anticipated that the change in the programs will actually lead to an increase in the number of offenders who are served over time. Namely, whereas the programs were historically open-ended (i.e., offenders could remain in the programs until eligible for release into the community – regardless of sentence length), the programs are now time-limited. This means that after a set period of time in the program, which typically ranges from 5-7 years depending upon the needs of the individual offender, an offender will be discharged from the program with a Completion Certificate. Whether the offender is eligible for release into the community via the Institutional Board of Review or is discharged to another Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) institution, the net effect of this change means that more offenders will be able to receive treatment in Patuxent's flagship programs over time.

It should be noted that while there has been a decrease in the number of offenders who receive services in the EP and PY programs at any static point in time, there has concurrently been an increase in the number of offenders who receive clinical services in other programs that have been developed at Patuxent Institution in recent years. For example, the Patuxent Assessment Unit (PAU) provides in-depth evaluation services to offenders who have recently been remanded to the care of the DPSCS and who evidence potential mental health concerns or unique housing needs. Additionally, the Patuxent Violator Program (PVP) provides cognitive-behavioral treatment to parole violators who are remanded back to the DPSCS and who are otherwise ineligible for services at maintaining institutions.

## **Inmate Assault Rates**

**Issue: The Patuxent Institution should comment on efforts to reduce the assault rate, particularly for MHU.**

**Response:** The institution monitors the assault rates for the various offender populations.

In reviewing the inmate on staff assaults at Patuxent, it is apparent that 78% of these assaults were committed by mental health inmates, 12% were committed by DOC inmates and 9% were committed by inmates in other programmatic designations.

The majority of mental health assaults on staff were bodily fluids and less serious physical assaults on correctional staff. It can be noted that 85% of the bodily fluid assaults were committed by repeat offenders and 85% of the less serious assaults involved inmates throwing food, unknown liquids, liquid soaked paper, or objects at staff. Mental health inmates often act out their frustrations and symptom complexes that have led to their placement on this unit. The fluctuations noted in the mental health population is primarily a function of the severity of both the symptoms related to the referral to the mental health unit and the criminogenic personality factors associated with their behavior in the community that resulted in incarceration. The institution has on an on-going basis instituted the use of plexiglass shields during rounds, meals and dispensing medication. In addition, there has been consultation with the vendor that provides clinical services to this population for the purpose of increasing the number of groups and activities for inmates within the mental health unit. The institution is piloting the utilization of packs rather than cups or cartons on the more problematic housing units in order to reduce the ability to store liquids.

The institution also monitors the inmate on inmate assault rate. The mental health population accounts for a significant percentage of the inmate-on inmate assaults associated with throwing unknown fluids aimed at either inmate workers on the unit or other mental health inmates. Inmates being evaluated by the Patuxent Assessment Unit comprised 18% of the assaults. The mission of this unit is to provide a 30-day comprehensive evaluation with recommendation for placement within the department. These inmates have been identified as having potential and often significant mental illness but are considered general population because they have not been admitted to the mental health unit. Inmates in the Regimented Offender Treatment Center account for 15% of the inmate on inmate assaults. This is a dormitory style housing arrangement that utilizes a modified therapeutic community to address substance abuse problems. Offenders in the Patuxent Youth Program account for approximately 23% of the assaults. This inmate population which was under the age of 21 at the time of sentencing is prone to impulsive acting out and engagement in antisocial behavior. Their behavior is often problematic and challenging upon initial arrival to the program and then typically improves as they engage in treatment programming.

The institution is committed to addressing all forms of assaults within the facility. In addition to specific interventions directed toward reducing assaultive behavior on the mental health unit the institution has implemented on-going strategies to reduce assaults across the entire inmate population. First, the institution has a Violence Reduction Committee that meets on a monthly basis to review incidents within the institution for the purpose of developing

strategies to address areas of increased assaults. Second, the Intelligence Office reviews inmate transfers for the purpose of identifying gang affiliation and close scrutiny of inmate behavior within the institution. Third, the institution monitors inmate behavior through the use of video recording in areas within the institution that have been associated with assaultive behavior. Fourth, the institution is committed to the reduction of contraband into the institution which can be a significant factor associated with assaultive behavior among inmates. The institution believes that these interventions are consistent with enhancing the safety of both staff and inmates within the facility.

### **Recommended Actions**

1. Reduce federal funds to correct for budgeting error. -\$100,000 FF

**Response:** The Department concurs with the recommended action.