Message from DYS Director Harvey Reed  
Facilities Pass PREA Audits  
January 19, 2018

The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) of 2003 is a Federal law established to address the elimination and prevention of sexual assault and rape in correctional systems. PREA applies to all federal, state, and local prisons, jails, police lockups, private facilities, and community settings such as residential facilities. The law seeks to improve the detention, prevention, and prosecution of sexual harassment and abuse in correctional facilities across the country.

The U.S. Department of Justice identified 185 standards and sub-standards that juvenile justice agencies must follow to establish a zero-tolerance policy toward sexual misconduct. Correctional facilities across the country must undergo regular audits to ensure compliance, and independent auditors first began reviewing Ohio’s juvenile facilities in May 2014. All 3 of Ohio’s Juvenile Correctional Facilities, the 12 Community Corrections Facilities, Central Ohio Youth Center, and Lighthouse Youth Center at Paint Creek have all passed these external audits, which are required under the law and take place every 3 years.

In 2017, seven Ohio juvenile facilities participated in PREA audits, and all seven sites met all of the standards. These facilities included Lucas County Youth Treatment Center, Central Ohio Youth Center, North Central Ohio Rehabilitation Center, Perry Multi-County Juvenile Facility, Lighthouse Youth Center at Paint Creek, Hocking Valley Community Residential Center, and Indian River Juvenile Correctional Facility. The results demonstrate that the safety of our youth is our top priority. Staff at each site worked diligently to meet all of the standards and ensure the strongest possible safeguards.

The department’s zero tolerance policy dictates that anyone who engages in, fails to report or knowingly condones sexual harassment or sexual abuse of a youth shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Employees also are required to immediately report any inappropriate behavior between staff and youth. The policy protects both employees and youth against any form of retaliation when they make a report.

Five sites are up for audits this year, including Cuyahoga Hills Juvenile Correctional Facility. A schedule is posted here.

*DYS funds nearly 100 percent of the operational costs of the twelve Community Corrections Facilities, which are operated by counties and used to treat lower-level felony delinquent youth who otherwise would be committed to a DYS facility.