



**Performance Audit of the**  
**Cresson Secure Treatment Unit**

**Department of Public Welfare**  
**Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**

**September 2011**

September 15, 2011

The Honorable Tom Corbett  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Dear Governor Corbett:

This report contains the results of a performance audit of the Cresson Secure Treatment Unit of the Department of Public Welfare from July 1, 2007, to November 10, 2010, unless indicated otherwise in the individual findings. We conducted our audit under the authority provided in Section 402 of The Fiscal Code and in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Our audit included three objectives areas: staffing, training, and employee complaints. Each of these objectives is described in more detail in the report along with the audit scope and methodology for each objective. Our work results did not disclose any deficiencies. We discussed the contents of the report with management of the Cresson Secure Treatment Unit.

Sincerely,

**JACK WAGNER**  
Auditor General

**Cresson Secure Treatment Unit of the  
Department of Public Welfare**

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**Background  
Information**

*History, mission,  
and operating  
statistics*

**Department of Public Welfare –  
Office of Children, Youth and Families**

The Office of Children, Youth and Families was established in 1980 as an office within the Department of Public Welfare. The responsibilities of the Office of Children, Youth and Families include providing child welfare services and operating youth development centers, youth forestry camps, and child day care services. Pennsylvania's child welfare system is county-administered and state-supervised. Child welfare and juvenile justice services are organized, managed, and delivered by county children and youth agencies and county juvenile probation offices.

The Youth Development Center/Youth Forestry Camp (YDC/YFC) system had already been established in 1959 under authority of the Department of Public Welfare. The YDC/YFC system comprised the public sector portion of the institutions for delinquent youths, which is now a responsibility of the Office of Children, Youth and Families.

**Bureau of Juvenile Justice Service**

The Office of Children, Youth and Families' web site states:

The Bureau of Juvenile Justice Services (BJJS) is responsible for the management, operations, program planning, and oversight of all the youth development center/youth forestry camp facilities. These facilities are designed to provide state-of-the-art treatment, care, and custody services to Pennsylvania's most at-risk youth.

The youth entrusted to our care are male and female adolescents who have been adjudicated delinquent by their county judicial system. From the time of referral, we ensure that every youth receives individualized treatment services based on his/her strengths and needs. BJJS treatment services value

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strong child, family, and community partnerships and promote competency, development, and victim awareness, while advocating for the continued improvement and integration of all child-serving systems.

All aspects of the BJJS facilities are based on the Restorative Justice concept<sup>1</sup> thereby ensuring that all the facility programs provide equal attention to the victim, the youth, and the community.<sup>2</sup>

**Cresson Secure Treatment Unit**

The Department of Public Welfare contracts with the Justice Resource Institute<sup>3</sup> to staff and operate Cresson Secure Treatment Unit. Cresson Secure Treatment Unit is a 52-bed maximum-security facility for adjudicated male offenders who exhibit violent, aggressive, and/or disruptive behaviors, and who have exhausted all other resources within the state juvenile justice system. Included in the facility is a 13-bed unit designated to treat emotionally disturbed offenders. The facility is located on the grounds of the State Correctional Institution at Cresson in Cambria County.

The treatment program used at Cresson Secure Treatment Unit is firmly grounded in the balanced and restorative justice model in which each committed youth is held accountable for his actions and encouraged to accept personal responsibility for his behavior. To facilitate these processes, the treatment program consists of individual counseling, group therapy, and family counseling; social and interpersonal skill development; and educational case management, resident life, and recreation/physical fitness activities.

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<sup>1</sup> The Restorative Justice concept is based on the understanding that crime is an act against both the victim and community. Restoring the victim and community is a vital part of a young offender's treatment process with the hope of decreasing chances that the person will reoffend.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/dpworganization/officeofchildrenyouthandfamilies/bureauofjuvenilejustice/services/index.htm>, viewed January 20, 2011. Re-verified September 6, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> The Justice Resource Institute is a private company located in Boston, Massachusetts.

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The Cresson Secure Treatment Unit school program is operated by the Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8 for the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The Pennsylvania Department of Education has approved Cresson Secure Treatment Unit's educational program as an alternative secondary school which offers a full range of classes to meet the needs of a broad spectrum of learners.<sup>4</sup>

The following schedule presents selected unaudited Cresson Secure Treatment Unit operating statistics compiled for the fiscal years ended June 30, 2008, 2009, and 2010:

| <b>Fiscal year ended June 30</b>            | <b>2008</b>    | <b>2009</b>    | <b>2010</b>    |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Operational expenditures <sup>5</sup>       | \$4,177,267.15 | \$3,420,854.74 | \$4,782,594.54 |
| Employee complement at year end             | 77             | 85             | 87             |
| Bed capacity at year end                    | 52             | 52             | 52             |
| Student population at year end              | 44             | 45             | 28             |
| Actual student days of care <sup>6</sup>    | 17,434         | 16,016         | 14,016         |
| Available student days of care <sup>7</sup> | 19,032         | 18,980         | 18,980         |
| Percentage of utilization <sup>8</sup>      | 91.6%          | 84.4%          | 73.8%          |

<sup>4</sup> Information obtained from Justice Resource Institute, Inc., Cresson Secure Treatment Unit, Facility Overview; provided by the facility director on September 16, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Operating expenses were recorded net of fixed asset costs, an amount that would be charged as part of depreciation. In addition, regional- and department-level direct and indirect charges are not allocated to the totals reported here.

<sup>6</sup> The figures for "actual student days of care" were provided by the Cresson Secure Treatment Unit business manager.

<sup>7</sup> The figures for "available student days of care" were calculated by multiplying the bed capacity by the number of calendar days in the year. Please note that 2008 was a leap year and therefore had 366 calendar days.

<sup>8</sup> The figures for "percentage of utilization" were calculated by dividing the "actual student days of care" by the "available student days of care."

**Cresson Secure Treatment Unit of the  
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*Objectives, Scope,  
and Methodology*

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**Objectives,  
Scope, and  
Methodology**

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Our performance audit of the Cresson Secure Treatment Unit had three objectives, which we selected from the following areas: staffing, training, and complaints. The specific audit objectives were as follows:

- One: To determine if Cresson Secure Treatment Unit met the required minimum staffing levels on selected shifts, if Cresson Secure Treatment Unit's staff possessed the minimum educational requirements, and if Cresson Secure Treatment Unit's management completed the proper criminal history background checks on newly hired staff. (Findings 1 and 2)
- Two: To determine if Cresson Secure Treatment Unit's staff received the required training, including new staff orientation. We also reviewed instructor qualifications. (Finding 3)
- Three: To review employee grievances/complaints and suggestions, and to evaluate Cresson Secure Treatment Unit's management's efforts to respond to them. (Finding 4)

The scope of the audit covered the period from July 1, 2007, to November 10, 2010, unless indicated otherwise in the individual findings.

The methodology we used is described in each objective area within the Audit Results section of this report.



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**Audit Results**

In the pages that follow, we have organized our audit results into three sections, one for each objective. Each of the three sections is organized as follows:

- Statement of the objective.
- Relevant laws, policies, or agreements.
- Methodologies used to gather sufficient evidence to meet the objective.
- Findings and conclusions, if applicable.

Our audit of Cresson Secure Treatment Unit did not reveal any deficiencies; therefore, this report does not contain recommendations or comments from the Cresson Secure Treatment Unit's management.

**Cresson Secure Treatment Unit of the  
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Staffing*

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**Audit Results  
for Objective  
One**

*Staffing*

**The objective**

Objective one for our performance audit was to determine if Cresson Secure Treatment Unit met the required minimum staffing levels on selected shifts, if Cresson Secure Treatment Unit’s staff possessed the minimum educational requirements, and if Cresson Secure Treatment Unit’s management completed the proper criminal history background checks on newly hired staff.

**Relevant laws, policies, or agreements**

The Justice Resource Institute operates Cresson Secure Treatment Unit for the Department of Public Welfare. According to the Justice Resource Institute’s mission statement, it “provides intensive residential programs employing effective treatment methodologies, supported by skilled clinicians, managers seeking excellence, and trained, compassionate caregivers.”<sup>9</sup>

**Methodologies to meet our objective**

In order to accomplish these objectives, we performed the following procedures:

- Reviewed the applicable policies and procedures.<sup>10</sup>
- Interviewed Cresson Secure Treatment Unit’s business manager.
- Randomly selected and tested 93 of 3,285 shifts from July 1, 2007, to June 30, 2010, to determine whether each shift met the minimum required staffing levels.
- Reviewed the personnel files of 12 child care supervisors and 79 child care workers who worked during the 93 shifts selected for testing to determine whether these individuals possessed the minimum educational requirements for their

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<sup>9</sup> Information obtained from the Justice Resource Institute, Inc., mission statement as provided by the facility director on September 16, 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Pennsylvania Code, Title 55 – Public Welfare, Chapter 3800 – Child Residential and Day Treatment Facilities, § 3800.50 – Staffing.

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respective positions as required by the Pennsylvania Code. We also tested to determine whether Cresson Secure Treatment Unit completed background checks, criminal history clearances, and child abuse history clearances in a timely manner.

**Finding 1**

**Cresson Secure Treatment Unit's staffing ratios met the requirements for this facility.**

Chapter 3800 of Title 55 of the Pennsylvania Code outlines the required minimum staffing levels for child residential and day treatment facilities. The facility is required to have one child care supervisor present at the facility at all times. In addition, the facility is required to have one child care worker for every eight children during awake hours and one child care worker for every 16 children during sleeping hours.<sup>11</sup>

Auditors randomly selected and tested 93 work shifts<sup>12</sup> from July 1, 2007, through June 30, 2010, to determine if Cresson Secure Treatment Unit met the minimum required staffing levels. Auditors tested 31 work shifts from each of the three daily shifts and compared the actual staff levels to the required levels based on resident census numbers.

Our audit of the 93 selected shifts found that Cresson Secure Treatment Unit's management staffed the shifts in accordance with state guidelines. Specifically, our testing did not uncover any staffing deficiencies and we found that all shifts met the required staffing ratios.

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<sup>11</sup> Pennsylvania Code, Title 55 – Public Welfare, Chapter 3800 – Child Residential and Day Treatment Facilities, § 3800.55 – Child Care Supervisor; § 3800.55 – Child Care Worker.

<sup>12</sup> The facility is required to be staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. One work shift consists of an eight-hour period. Therefore, there are three work shifts per day. Sleeping hours occur during the third shift.

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**Finding 2**

**Cresson Secure Treatment Unit’s management conducted timely and effective criminal background checks, and Cresson Secure Treatment Unit’s employees met educational requirements.**

Chapter 3490 of Title 55 of the Pennsylvania Code outlines the requirements for obtaining criminal history background checks for child care workers.<sup>13</sup> In addition, Chapter 3800 of Title 55 of the Pennsylvania Code outlines the required minimum educational requirements for both child care supervisors and workers. According to the Pennsylvania Code, child care supervisors are required to have either: 1) a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university, and one year of work experience with children; or 2) an associate’s degree or 60 credit hours from an accredited college or university, and three years of work experience with children.<sup>14</sup>

Our audit of personnel records for 12 child care supervisors and 79 child care workers found that the 91 employees selected for testing possessed the appropriate educational backgrounds and met the requirements for their respective positions. While looking at these personnel records, we also found that for these 91 employees, Cresson Secure Treatment Unit’s management conducted timely criminal history background checks.

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<sup>13</sup> Pennsylvania Code, Title 55 – Public Welfare, Chapter 3490 – Protective Services, § 3490.122 – Responsibilities of an applicant, prospective operator or legal entity of a child care service.

<sup>14</sup> Pennsylvania Code, Title 55 – Public Welfare, Chapter 3800 – Child Residential and Day Treatment Facilities, § 3800.55 – Child Care Supervisor; § 3800.55 – Child Care Worker.

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**Audit Results  
for Objective  
Two**

**The objective**

Objective two for our performance audit was to determine if Cresson Secure Treatment Unit's staff received the required training, including new staff orientation. We also reviewed instructor qualifications.

*Training*

**Relevant laws, policies, or agreements**

Cresson Secure Treatment Unit is responsible for providing all employees with initial orientation, continuing education, and training programs that focus on the basic skills and competencies necessary to provide quality services, promote safety, and protect the community. Initial orientation training includes discipline, care and management of children, reportable incident reporting, medication administration, and use of restrictive procedures. Staff are also required to receive annual training relating to the care and management of children, first aid, Heimlich techniques, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation.<sup>15</sup>

**Methodologies to meet our objective**

In order to accomplish this objective, we performed the following procedures:

- Reviewed the applicable policies and procedures.<sup>16</sup>
- Interviewed Cresson Secure Treatment Unit's director, business manager, and assistant residential director.
- Reviewed the training records for the 65 employees hired between January 1, 2007, and December 31, 2009.

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<sup>15</sup> Pennsylvania Code, Title 55 – Public Welfare, Chapter 3800 – Child Residential and Day Treatment Facilities, § 3800.58 – Staff Training.

<sup>16</sup> Pennsylvania Code, Title 55 – Public Welfare, Chapter 3800 – Child Residential and Day Treatment Facilities.

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- Reviewed the training records for all 94 active employees from January 1, 2007, through December 31, 2009.
  - Reviewed the qualifications of the three active instructors from January 1, 2007, through December 31, 2009

**Finding 3**

**Cresson Secure Treatment Unit’s employees met all training requirements.**

Chapter 3800 of Title 55 of the Pennsylvania Code outlines the required minimum orientation training hours and the required annual hours of training for each staff person. It states:

(a) Prior to working with children, each staff person who will have regular and significant direct contact with children, including part-time and temporary staff persons and volunteers, shall have an orientation to the person’s specific duties and responsibilities and the policies and procedures of the facility.....

(b) Prior to working alone with children and within 120 calendar days after the date of hire, the director and each full-time, part-time and temporary staff person who will have regular and significant direct contact with children, shall have at least 30 hours of training.....

(d) After the initial training, the director and each full-time, part-time and temporary staff person, who will have regular and significant direct contact with children, shall have at least 40 hours of training annually relating to the care and management of children.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Pennsylvania Code, Title 55 – Public Welfare, Chapter 3800 – Child Residential and Day Treatment Facilities, § 3800.58 – Staff Training.

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Our audit of the training records for the 65 new employees hired between January 1, 2007, and December 31, 2009, found that all 65 employees received the new hire orientation training and subsequent required continuing education.

Our audit also revealed that all 94 active employees received the required 40 hours of continuing education training.

In addition, auditors selected the three instructors who provided training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation, Heimlich techniques, and first aid to determine if these instructors maintained current training certifications. These instructors are contracted Justice Resource Institute employees who work full-time at Cresson Secure Treatment Unit. Our testing revealed that the three instructors maintained current training certifications.

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**Audit Results  
for Objective  
Three**

**The objective**

Objective three for this performance audit was to review employee grievances/complaints and suggestions, and to evaluate Cresson Secure Treatment Unit's management's efforts to respond to them.

*Staff Complaints*

**Relevant laws, policies, or agreements**

Over 90 individuals are employed at Cresson Secure Treatment Unit. Approximately 70 percent of employees are classified as bargaining unit employees, and they are represented by the Pennsylvania Social Services Union. The bargaining unit agreement includes specific procedures that are to be used when handling employee grievances/complaints concerning workplace issues.

**Methodologies to meet our objective**

In order to accomplish this objective, we performed the following procedures:

- Reviewed applicable policies and procedures regarding grievances/complaints.<sup>18</sup>
- Interviewed Cresson Secure Treatment Unit's director and the union steward.
- Reviewed the applicable union contract provisions relating to grievances and complaints.<sup>19</sup>
- Reviewed Cresson Secure Treatment Unit's complaint listing from July 1, 2007, through June 30, 2010.

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<sup>18</sup> Justice Resource Institute, Inc., Staff Personnel Policies Manual.

<sup>19</sup> Collective Bargaining Agreement between Justice Resources Institute, Inc., Cresson Secure Treatment Unit and Pennsylvania Social Services, Union, Local 668, SEIU, effective January 1, 2006, thru December 31, 2008; and August 1, 2008, thru July 31, 2010.



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**Finding 4**

**Cresson Secure Treatment Unit's management  
handled employee complaints in a timely manner.**

Cresson Secure Treatment Unit management does not have a formal written complaint process to address employee workplace issues. Employees are encouraged to discuss any concerns directly with their respective supervisor or the facility director so that the concerns may be resolved quickly. In addition, all employees are provided the opportunity to discuss concerns during daily meetings that occur prior to the start of each work shift. The facility also provides a suggestion box for those employees who would like to remain anonymous. The majority of staff are union employees that can utilize a formal grievance/complaint process as outlined in their contract with Justice Resource Institute.

Our testing of employee grievances/complaints revealed that staff raise concerns through the grievance procedure afforded to them through the union contract. Auditors found that Cresson Secure Treatment Unit's union staff filed 18 complaints from July 1, 2007, through June 30, 2010.

The union grievance process follows four steps for resolution. The first step is an initial meeting among the employee, the union representative, and the immediate supervisor. If the issue is not resolved, a second meeting is held with the employee, the union representative, and the facility director. If the issue is not resolved with this second meeting, a third meeting is held with the employee, the union representative, and a division director from Justice Resource Institute's corporate office. The fourth and final step of resolution is arbitration where an objective third party makes a decision based on the facts of the complaint.

Our audit disclosed that management of Cresson Secure Treatment Unit processed employee complaints in a timely manner. Further, we found that management investigated and documented complaints according to regulations. Additionally, we found that all initial meetings were held within the required 10-day timeframe.

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Of the 18 complaints we reviewed, nine grievances were resolved during the initial meeting, four were resolved during the second meeting, and another four were resolved by the third meeting. The remaining grievance had to be resolved with arbitration.

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