

**PROBATION OVERSIGHT
COMMISSION
ANNUAL INSPECTIONS:**

LOS PADRINOS JUVENILE HALL

2023

PREPARED BY:
SARAH GONGORA, PSY.D
JENNIFER OCHOA-GARCIA, MPA

SUMMARY

The Los Angeles County Probation Oversight Commission (POC), in its mission to oversee and make recommendations to the Los Angeles County Probation Department (Probation), is completing the third round of Annual Inspections of all of Probation's detention facilities. While Probation's facility utilization has changed substantially over the course of the last year, including changes in the utilization of Campus Kilpatrick, Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall, Central Juvenile Hall, and the re-opening of Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall (Los Padrinos), the POC has found it of critical importance to provide substantial feedback to Probation and the Board of Supervisors (Board) at this juncture as well as to provide the public information of the conditions observed within the facilities.

This summary presents the inspection findings of two inspections of Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall. During the first inspection of Los Padrinos in June 2023, the facility was undergoing round-the-clock preparation to open in the weeks that followed after being closed to the housing of youth since 2019. At the time, Los Padrinos was not yet housing any of the young people awaiting movement from the county's two other juvenile halls which were found unsuitable for the detention of youth by the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) earlier in the year. The second inspection took place nearly three months after Los Padrinos' re-opening which was intentionally scheduled late in the inspections cycle to allow the Probation Department time to settle in and launch the trainings, programs, and workplace culture improvements that were discussed by leadership during the planning stages of re-opening and at the first inspection.

The POC collected large amounts of information at each inspection. The following list represents key findings that arose through the two inspections of Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall:

- **Troubling reports of facility culture that antagonizes and incites violence** – While some young people reported positive and neutral interactions with staff, others shared examples of staff behaviors that left them agitated or vulnerable to victimization by their peers via acts of violence and bullying encouraged by staff. Interactions between youth and various staff assigned and deployed to the facility were reportedly often not trauma-informed nor rehabilitative, often due to overpopulation that spreads staff too thin to do anything more than provide a basic level of supervision. Beyond finding ways to improve the youth to staff ratios in the living units, there is a need to instill clear practice and ethical expectations of all staff and supervisors for the protection of young people who are at risk of and experiencing harm during their detention.
- **Missing programs and services and strained partnerships** – Key partnerships eroded since the re-opening of Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall, with a correlated decline in the scope of programs and services available. The Department of Mental Health (DMH) stopped providing key group programming since the opening of Los Padrinos, including groups that treat substance use disorders and the long-term effects of trauma. Individual therapy services were stifled by loss of access to keys as well as reports that some clinicians are afraid to meet with youth on their assigned units. Youth and staff alike reported a decrease in programming by community-based organizations since the facility re-opened. Staff and youth highlighted an absence of age-appropriate vocational training opportunities for older youth and high school graduates.
- **Delayed access to medical care** – Young people reported that they often waited in pain for days to receive needed medical services from Juvenile Court Health Services. At times, the delays occurred for appointments where youth needed to be transported elsewhere, but multi-day

delays also occurred for care within the facility. Reports from multiple departments indicated that the Probation's staffing of the facility was insufficient to get young people to their scheduled appointments.

- **The re-implementation of Oleoresin Capsicum spray** – Only two-weeks after the facility reopened with the promise of not introducing Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) spray, a major disturbance on July 28, 2023, reportedly triggered the re-issuance of OC spray to any staff requesting it and, in all units, including the spaces where youth with developmental disabilities, histories of commercial sexual exploitation, girls, and gender expansive youth were housed. There was no active or known plan to eliminate or phase out the use of OC spray at Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall.

The inspections described in this report highlight the need to address workplace culture at the facility, extending from how staff interact with young people to how multi-agency leaders work collaboratively for the benefit of the youth in custody. Prior to the move to Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall, Probation leadership publicly discussed this as an opportunity for a “fresh start” to reset the many work culture issues that plagued Central Juvenile Hall, including improving the work environment to raise morale, increasing meaningful training opportunities, permanently eliminating OC spray, and installing a behavioral change practice model. That these efforts have not been enacted at the facility three months after opening may be part of the expected bureaucratic delays in exacting change, but every day that passes exposes young people to conditions that leave them vulnerable to physical and psychological harm.

BACKGROUND

The Los Angeles County Probation Oversight Commission (POC) was established in 2021 as a civilian-led oversight commission focused on systemic reform of the Probation Department. The POC advises the Los Angeles County Probation Department (Probation) and the Board of Supervisors (Board) about progress and challenges within Probation.

The POC has some authority and responsibilities directly related to juvenile institutions. Specifically, the Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Sections 209 and 240, and the California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 15, Section 1313, authorizes and requires the POC to conduct annual inspections of the buildings, grounds, and services delivered to the young people detained in each of the County's juvenile facilities on an annual basis. The POC submits these annual reports to the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC), a statutory agency that inspects for compliance of standards of detention facilities in California, by December 31 each year.

This report marks the third round of annual inspections conducted by this body.

METHODS

At the beginning of the 2023 Annual Inspection cycle, Probation ran eight juvenile facilities: two juvenile detention centers (“juvenile halls”) and six juvenile camps, including the Dorothy Kirby Center (DKC) in Commerce, CA. On May 23, 2023, the BSCC found both Central Juvenile Hall and Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall “unsuitable for the confinement of minors” due to a lack of compliance in areas of facility functioning such as staffing, room confinement, educational programs, and other programs, recreation, and exercise.¹ Probation was afforded a 60-day period to move all pre-dispositioned youth out of these two facilities. In response, the Probation Department formulated a plan to re-open Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall which was closed in 2019. On July 19, 2023, Probation stated in a memo to the Board that all youth

pending disposition had been moved from both Central Juvenile Hall and Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall into Los Padrinos. Probation indicated that Central Juvenile Hall would be used only as a holding facility for medical appointments. Because the BSCC did not have jurisdiction to make unsuitability findings at a Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF), the youth dispositioned to SYTF were able to remain at Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall.

Since changes were occurring throughout the inspections cycle, the POC reconfigured our inspections plans, which finalized as follows:

- Two POC Commissioners conducted each inspection described in this report. In addition, two or more POC staff members provided support during each inspection. Dates for the inspections were coordinated with Probation leadership and leaders from each facility were aware in advance of the inspection.
- The BSCC does not have a required template for the inspection report. The POC developed a detailed, 12-page facility inspection template that was updated this year and reviewed by Probation and the BSCC. Within that template, areas of interest are highlighted to ensure a thorough inspection of both physical structure and environment, but also highlights the need to examine practices and treatment of youth at the facility level. Prior to each inspection, the template was shared with Probation leadership at each facility, respectively. Each formal inspection took between four–eight hours to complete.
- The first facilities inspected were the Dorothy F. Kirby Center and Camp Scott which continue to be located together on a single campus in Commerce. Next, a pre-inspection was conducted of Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall prior to re-opening. All camps were inspected: Camp Afflerbaugh, Camp Paige, Camp Rockey, and Campus Kilpatrick. The POC decided to conduct a limited inspection of Central Medical Hub, located in the facility formerly known as Central Juvenile Hall. Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall was then inspected since youth dispositioned to SYTF continue to be housed there. Finally, an inspection was conducted in Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall after its re-opening which brought of all pre-dispositioned youth in Los Angeles County into the facility.

The information below depicts data gathered directly from the two facility inspections of Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall. It should be noted that the data is a “snapshot” captured during the day of the inspection. The data collected about the “facility’s rated capacity,” “population” and “staffing” was provided to the POC staff directly by a facility Director; each of these numbers was directly placed in this report without edit. The only two numbers which required calculation in this report were the “Staff to Youth Ratio” and the “Number of Graduates.” Staff to Youth ratio is calculated by dividing the number of total active staff by the total youth population. For clarification, these ratios do not reflect the actual staff to youth ratios per shift, but rather a broad staff to youth ratio for each facility.

The findings stated in this report are a compilation of POC Commissioner and staff observations made while conducting the inspections.

PRE-INSPECTION FINDINGS

This inspection was conducted on June 15, 2023, prior to youth being housed at the facility. Upon entering the facility, an x-ray machine and a metal detector were observed, though not yet tended to by security. There was a staffed reception and all commissioners and POC staff were asked for identification and to sign in a visitor’s log.

The walkthrough of the facility revealed that the majority of the buildings were close to being ready to open and appeared to range from being days to multiple weeks away from completion according to Probation's plans. There was no reported or apparent need for electrical, plumbing, or HVAC work. Remaining work expected to be done on the units included installing cameras and scanners for room checks, installing furnishings (including beds, tables, and movable furniture), hanging appropriate signage and required posters, and extensive cleaning. Commissioners did not inspect every unit as some were taped off for construction or were identical to those inspected. Units inspected included:

- Units P and Q: An older building designated to house girls. Together, the units can hold up to 40 youth, which is more than are expected to move to Los Padrinos. The rooms all had sinks but only a few had toilets. Bathrooms and showers were renovated. The units have their own enclosed outdoor area, but it appeared extremely rundown and lacked outdoor furniture. On this unit, the day rooms appeared small.
- Units R/S and X/Y: Newer buildings, at least one of these units was recently occupied by a community organization's transitional housing program. These buildings have capacity to house up to 120 youth total (15 youth per unit, per side, per floor). All have functional wet rooms with toilet and sink. Exterior of buildings looked well maintained, though some of the buildings had signage incorrectly indicating they were a Hope Center. Shower stalls were observed in each unit.
- Units T/U and G/H: Older buildings which can hold up to 80 youth between them. These units were planned for 13–14-year-olds and for isolation. They appeared old but functional. There was a significant amount of graffiti etched into surfaces. 20 of the 80 rooms were wet rooms. The bathrooms and showers inspected appeared renovated and ready.
- Units L/M and N/O were much like T/U and G/H and were also older construction. Combined, these two units can house up to 80 youth. Very few of the rooms in these two units were wet rooms.

Commissioners observed that the interior of newer buildings appeared more modern and cleaner while the interior of older buildings were obviously old, although with refreshed paint, updated furniture, and cameras. Commissioners remarked that the interiors of all buildings were prison-like. Some had the type of doors and windows that have caused problems at the current halls due to being easily broken or manipulated by youth. Overall, the exterior of buildings and outdoor areas appeared old but functional and safe. The building exteriors are reminiscent of underfunded, inner-city schools.

The kitchen was visited and while it was clean and looked ready for use, staff had not yet moved in to use the space. All plumbing and electrical appeared functional and most of the large equipment was working, though a repairman was working on some equipment while we were there. No food or cooking utensils had been brought in yet.

The facility had multiple large grassy areas which were watered and looked ready for recreation purposes. There were some basketball hoops in varying degrees of repair but no other outdoor recreation equipment. Commissioners observed the swimming pool from a distance, and it appeared in good working condition.

For youth in the older units, school classrooms were a short walk away. The girls' classroom and library area looked especially well restored. The interiors of classrooms were remarkably upgraded from previous POC visits to the facility with carpet, brighter lighting, fresh paint, and more comfortable furniture. They are generally comparable to a well-maintained public-school classroom. Smartboards were not installed in the classrooms at the school, but it appeared they would be soon.

Commissioners visited the medical units which appeared physically ready, though staff needed to move in. The room where medication will be kept still had unneeded furniture in it and none of the equipment for securing and dispensing medication had been brought in. There were insufficient rooms for isolation and observation in the medical unit, so plans have been made to use unit G/H for overflow.

The physical structures were reported to be on track to be ready for over 300 youth. However, there was no established maximum capacity of the facility based on realistic staffing expectations and pending BSCC approval. Probation leadership reported a hope for at least 5 staff per shift, per building (i.e., per 30-40 youth) which would require around 120 staff showing up daily to adequately staff the facility to confine the entire juvenile hall population. The school staffing plan was to have 28 teachers, which would maintain student/teacher ratios similar to those at Central Juvenile Hall.

Visitation and plans for other anticipated programming opportunities for youth were not confirmed at the time of this inspection. There appeared to be insufficient space for family and attorney visits. POC commissioners and staff were informed that attorney and other special visits would take place in the chapel which was a single open room that offered little opportunity for privacy.

ANNUAL INSPECTION FINDINGS

October 2023

Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall: 7285 Quill Dr., Downey, CA 90242

Facility Rated Capacity: 323

Youth Population (Physical) – Co-Ed.	Youth at Court/Medical	Total Staff (Payroll)	Total Active Staff (DSO's and GSN's)	Staff to Youth Ratio (Number of Staff at time of Inspection / Youth Pop.) rounded to whole number	Line staff on Duty at time of inspection	Total Credentialed Teachers (LACOE)	Number of High School Students	Number of High School Graduates
283*	43	682	671	1:3	81	26	254	29

*Total number includes youth at court and medical

Access to Medical and Mental Health Services

Juvenile Court Health Services (JCHS)	Services Offered: 7 days / week	Coverage: 24-hour coverage, Seven days per week Dental: M-F 7am- 3:30pm
Department of Mental Health (DMH)	Services Offered: 7 days / week	Coverage: 8:00 AM – 8:00 PM (Staff Shifts: 10-hour days, Sun – Wed or Wed – Sat.) plus 24-hour access to on-call DMH psychiatrist

Facility and Physical Environment

The Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall (Los Padrinos) entry way included security officers tending an x-ray machine which all visitors passed all belongings through before stepping through a metal detector. Signs were posted at the entrance noting dress code and contraband items prohibited from entering the facility. The lobby had a reception center where Probation employees asked visitors to sign into binders and show appropriate identification. There are two entrance options from the lobby: through the administration building or through another secured entry which requires being buzzed through by Probation staff that issue the facility keys. It was reported that only Probation staff have access to those keys and that staff of other departments do not.

The grounds open to manicured grassy areas with covered walkways running along the various buildings. There is a gated pool that appeared clean and maintained in part of the central grass area. Steps from the pool there is a chapel where religious services are held on the weekends and on weekdays was most often utilized for special visits for youth with their attorneys, social workers, or others as required.

Youth reported issues with power outages (“the power goes off regularly”) and the commissioners experienced three power outages, some lasting more than five minutes, during the inspection. During that time, commissioners were in the administration building and were told that the units were either unaffected by the outage or operate on generators during an outage.

As noted in the pre-inspection of Los Padrinos, parts of the facility were gated off prior to re-opening the facility to separate populations of youth. The unit currently used to house girls was built with a high walled area for outside recreation. No additional wet rooms were added since the opening of Los Padrinos. Shower areas in the units had appropriate privacy curtains. A common thread throughout the units was that young people asked for warmer water, as they reported that the shower water was “too cold”. Various young people also reported that the water pressure in the showers was unacceptably low.

In multiple units, the youth appeared to have used either soap, brown paper bags, cloth, or a combination of these materials to cover their room windows. In some cases, the windows were fully covered, in others a strip of glass was intentionally left transparent. The young people reported that this was done for privacy when relieving themselves as these units had wet rooms. The window coverings were also noted in units that do not have wet rooms. Commissioners noted that most buildings were at various levels of disrepair as most had broken windows, broken ceiling tiles, broken doors, rooms not in use due to issues with the locks, and full trash bags next to the exits. One of the Juvenile Court Health Services (JCHS)/DMH self-referral boxes was broken in one of the newer units.

Each unit had at least one public phone that staff and youth explained worked after 3:00pm, in most units and that Probation staff was in control of usage. In at least one unit with high school graduates, the phones were operable during the school day as well. The young people reported that contacting their attorneys was very challenging due to limited phone times and constantly changing visitation schedules. There was one unit that had a broken phone, which Probation staff shared was previously reported to ISD for repair. Youth in this unit were limited to using the phone in the office in the presence of the Senior DSO, limiting any privacy. Nearly all dayrooms had Grievance, OYCR, “Know Your Rights” i.e. Youth Bill of Rights, and PREA posters. Grievance boxes were observed in each unit and had working locks.

Young people in various units had concerns about their ability to receive visits. One youth remarked that their attorney waited for three hours before being denied access reportedly due to Probation staffing shortages. Similar reports were made by youth regarding their family members being denied entry during visiting hours. Youth reported that family visits are only allowed on the weekends, which raised concerns for those parents that work during the weekend. Another youth reported that their mother was not able to visit because the mother has visible face tattoos. Probation leadership stated that the issue had not come up, but that special visits during a weekday could not be accommodated.

Young people interviewed by commissioners asked for their clothes to be changed out more often. Youth reported that they needed more than one bra and pair of pants per week, which is what they were reportedly allotted. Three young people expressed not wanting to wear re-usable underwear as stains from previous usage were still present after the garments were washed and presented as “clean”. One youth reported that they did not know that the underwear was previously used. These young people expressed that this experience was degrading and something that they felt should be remedied immediately.

On various units, youth and staff alike expressed concerns about the range of ages housed on their living units. Youth of various ages had concerns that 13- and 14-year-olds should not be living with youth 18 and older. Concerns cited by young people focused on the developmental differences and the resulting differences in programming needs between younger and older teens. Some youth said that because of the diversity of needs of youth housed on their units, everyone ended up going without something that they needed. Leadership and line staff expressed concerns about the housing that centered on their ability to maintain a safe environment and about liability issues for staff should violence occur. Some Probation staff expressed concern for the well-being and best interests of youth.

During the inspection, the POC staff and commissioners were informed that the facility was put on a “lock down” due to a small fire in one of the units. After about ten or fifteen minutes, the lock down was called off as the fire had been extinguished. Additional details regarding the incident were not shared with the POC commissioners or staff.

Staffing

Between the pre-inspection and the annual inspection, there was a change in facility leadership at Los Padrinos which removed the individuals that coordinated the planning and opening of the facility. On the day of the official Los Padrinos Inspection, one commissioner and POC staff noted that staffing levels in each of the units appeared sufficient to maintain safety and security. While interviewing youth at Los Padrinos, there were reports of positive and supportive staff behaviors and interactions as well as reports of highly concerning behaviors. In line with what some youth expressed about positive behavior reinforcement, one youth shared:

“We have good Probation staff. They go above and beyond to help us. Our current staff, she brings us pizza and soda for Friday’s movie night, then we have Saturday dinner together, but the staff do need help, we need more staff like her that know how talk to us.”

Commissioners observed that staff on some units appeared motivated but tired. One Probation staff member mentioned that they were doing the work because they cared for the young people but would appreciate more support from experienced staff. Another staff member stated that experienced staff are experts at using relationship building for de-escalation and did so more often than they used other punitive tactics.

Some young people interviewed throughout the day expressed that most staff treated them well, yet other young people shared examples of inappropriate and unprofessional behaviors exhibited by staff toward youth. Many serious concerns about staff behaviors and actions were voiced about the girls' unit. Throughout interviews with numerous girls in the unit, girls shared concerning reports of staff escalating violence, not intervening to stop violence, and youth on youth violence. One youth reported:

"Some staff are super nice, and some staff are messy. They tell other kids if you disrespect them, and the other kids retaliate against you for disrespecting that staff. One girl confronted a staff, then she was being jumped by the staff's [preferred] kids."

It was reported by numerous girls that some staff encouraged verbal and physical confrontations between different girls on the units. The young people stated that the staff members take sides during conflicts, creating fear, and made youth question staff's interest and willingness in protecting them from violence. It was reported that girls were "jumped" when a staff intentionally "left the middle door open, and the girls on the other unit got through and jumped us while in the shower." It was also reported by numerous girls that "staff open your room door so that the other girls come to destroy your room." On other units, young people shared that some staff used the threat of OC spray as their approach to verbal de-escalation.

Concerns about short staffing across units were voiced by youth, Probation staff, and co-located county partners despite the number of staff present on the day of the inspection. Probation staff shared that they were concerned about the lack of programming and services made available to youth due to low staffing, excess absenteeism by staff, and the lack of training when working young people over the age of 18. Due to short staffing, Los Padrinos utilized deployed Special Enforcement Officers (SEO). Concerns about the attitudes and behaviors of the SEO staff were repeatedly voiced throughout the facility by staff and youth alike.

Two youth showed the commissioners bruising that they said was the result of "the men in black," and apparent reference to the SEOs who dress in all-black, more militaristic appearing uniforms that distinguish them from other staff. Some youth said that they felt abused by the SEOs due to repeated take downs and youth reported being "roughed up" by the officers. It was reported by various county employees and youth that the SEOs were seen as antagonistic to youth and that their presence caused tension, agitated youth, and added to de-escalation work for DSOs. Agency partners also noted confusion in identifying which staff were SEOs, school officers, or deployed field staff, since there were various types of dress/uniforms in use at the facility by Probation staff. In some units, deployed staff were noted wearing "casual street clothes" and there was little consistency in other staff uniforms. POC Commissioners and staff were concerned that Probation leadership was also not able to differentiate between deployed staff, school staff, SEO, or DSOs assigned to the facility during the inspection.

Room Confinement/Hope Center Use

There was not a Hope Center at Los Padrinos. The area previously used as a Hope Center was utilized as a regular living unit. One girl was observed alone in room confinement within her assigned living unit while reportedly on enhanced supervision level 3, which requires one-on-one supervision and an open door due to safety risks to self or others. No other young people were observed in room confinement during the inspection.

Grievances

Since Los Padrinos' reopening three months earlier, 132 grievances were made by young people detained in the facility. The grievances were reviewed by commissioners who noted that grievances were made about Probation, Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), Juvenile Court Health Services (JCHS) and DMH. POC commissioners observed that Probation-related grievances commonly focused on youth reporting a lack of online gaming access, poor television reception, and a desire for more food. There were a few more concerning grievances that indicated that youth felt unsafe housed with other young people of different ages, felt unsafe housed with peers who they perceived as not receiving appropriate mental health treatment and other rehabilitative care, and that youth wanted their own mental health services to be delivered in a private area and for more than a brief check in. JCHS-related grievances told of youth who reported receiving medications at the wrong time, not receiving prescribed treatments for opioid dependence, and not being seen for medical appointments. Grievances appeared responded to in an organized, thorough, and timely way with documentation complete. Commissioners noted that they observed grievance posters in the living areas of all units, and that young people indicated understanding of the grievance procedure during interviews.

Discipline and Positive Behavior Reinforcement

Probation leadership did not report the current use of any specific discipline or positive behavior reinforcement program. However, it was reported that Probation leadership would implement a new Behavior Management Program (BMP) in the near future. While other facilities report use of point-based rewards systems, during the inspection there was no reward system nor "Al Jones" store where youth can effectively "purchase" consumable goods or personal hygiene items with points earned through the positive behavior incentive programs.

Commissioners learned of one example of discipline and positive behavior reinforcement that was initiated and implemented by the Probation supervisor or senior DSO on one unit and was not the result of a coordinated departmental action. Their unique reward system involved staff putting on a dinner on Saturday nights for the unit if the youth sustain a certain level of good behavior during the week. Staff purchased everything brought from their own resources. Young people who had participated in this program shared that they were positively impacted by the staff's efforts and said, "[we] eat with the staff every Saturday and it feels like a family and it feels good."

School

Commissioners observed schooling in two distinct ways. Inside the newer buildings, the classrooms are in a hallway directly connected to the unit day room. In the older buildings, the youth are moved out of the unit and attend class at the school in classrooms on two different parts of the campus. The commissioners first went to a classroom within a unit, where the teacher was giving a math lesson to a class of seven students. The teacher had good rapport with the students as most were engaged, the teacher knew the students by their first names, and students answered math questions when called upon. This classroom was heavily staffed; there were four LACOE staff (including one teacher, two teacher assistants, and one behavior interventionist) and two Probation officers.

Upon arrival to the school, LACOE leadership informed the commission that all students were taking state tests that day and commissioners honored leadership's preference to limit classroom observation to minimize possible interruption. When testing was finished, commissioners were allowed inside the classrooms. A commissioner noted that they observed teachers and students engaged in active discussion. Students were being called on to build upon topics learned in previous lessons, and students

were given affirmation and guidance. The classrooms visited during the inspection appeared clean with new equipment.

Several Probation officers were observed sitting outside the classrooms at the school, some wearing regular “civilian” clothes and others wearing “tactical” clothes: combat-looking shoes with black cargo pants, black gloves, and black long sleeves. Probation leadership and LACOE leadership reported that the “school team” of security officers at the school were not the same as SEO and reported that inconsistency of appearance by the Probation officers was not an issue since those school enforcement officers had good rapport with the youth.

At the school, several classrooms had broken windows that were covered with wooden boards. Principal Jackson reported that the windows had been broken for approximately one week, the issue was reported to ISD and were pending repair.

LACOE leadership provided information about the students served at Los Padrinos, which at 254 students is a much larger, more diverse school than any of the other schools in Probation’s juvenile facilities. Of the 254 students, 101 (40%) have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) indicating a need for special educational services. LACOE administrators shared that in a typical community school that rate is generally an average of 12%. LACOE staff also explained that they are working to be able to provide dual enrollment opportunities for students that would allow them to earn both high school and college credits, an important program given the larger number of students who are older and closer to graduation.

The commissioners were escorted to the county library in the girls’ school building. The library appeared renovated, clean, with numerous books, work areas, and bean bags. The library was also equipped with naloxone and a boxed defibrillator.

Post Secondary Education

As a result of comments shared by youth during the formal Los Padrinos inspection and during other previous, informal inspections of the facility about a lack of post-secondary education opportunities for high school graduates, commissioners took time during this inspection to carefully observe this issue. Commissioners visited the dayroom of a unit where most youth were in high school classes and observed and interviewed two high school graduates. The youth reported that they were not offered any higher education, programming, or other rehabilitative activities. The young people were sitting in the middle of the dayroom watching television and reported that this was their daily routine. Commissioners observed a college class being held in the day room of another unit, which consisted of a single student working on a laptop with two Probation staff sitting next to them. Commissioners questioned why there was not a designated classroom space in the facility for young people taking college courses, and learned that there is a designated classroom for college students, but that youth from “the compound” (a reference to location of the units at Barry J. Nidorf where youth facing more serious charges or designated as more of a safety risk are held that is still regularly used by youth and staff to refer to these units) are not allowed to attend class in the college classroom. Commissioners visited another “compound” unit where most of the youth were high school graduates. Youth described in detail their concerns about only being able to choose from a limited number of college courses, falling behind in their courses because they could only complete work when a Probation Education staff member brought them a laptop to the unit, and wanting to pursue coursework that would lead to employment when they returned home.

Later in the day, commissioners visited the designated classroom for college studies and observed three students in the classroom with Probation Education staff helping them complete coursework for classes at Mission College.

Kitchen and Food

Commissioners observed lunch on one of the units. All meals at Los Padrinos are consumed in the units' day rooms. During lunch, young people were observed eating taquitos, churros, guacamole, corn, and drinking milk. The young people expressed liking the food and did not have any concerns about the meal. Some young people in the other units expressed that the food they had that day for lunch was "acceptable" but wanted "seconds and snacks". On one unit, Probation staff provided the young people with condiments. The young people mentioned that although the food was acceptable, they would prefer "better flavored food." Probation staff were seen providing young people with snacks (chips/cookies) after their meal.

Access to Medical and Mental Health Care

Commissioners D and G were informed by a young person that they waited three days for a medical visit for an x-ray at the Central Medical Hub. Commissioners were informed that when the youth was taken to the appointment, he was handcuffed and shackled, despite having an injured wrist which was the body part set to be x-rayed. Other youth reported issues with multiple-day delays to be seen by JCHS staff for medical treatment within the facility. Some limited JCHS services were previously provided directly on the units, however on the day of the inspection JCHS leadership shared that the nurses were unwilling to go into the units and would only see patients in the medical unit. Key issues resulting in the refusal to go to the units were inappropriate youth to staff ratio leading to safety concerns and a lack of mobile equipment. JCHS staff reported, and Probation staff agreed, that there was not sufficient space for medical overflow. All were hopeful that with the completion of building A, the overflow shortage would be alleviated. POC staff toured the unopened Building A and observed it to be clean, freshly painted and with new flooring, and very close to ready for opening which Probation staff reported would happen within days of the inspection.

Naloxone, also known as Narcan, was observed within the facility, albeit less frequently than expected. Naloxone is a potentially life-saving intervention used to treat a known or suspected opioid overdose in an adult or child. Signs were up in unit offices indicating that Naloxone was stored there, though very few Probation employees were observed to have it on their person, including leadership and line staff. Keeping Naloxone in a locked office potentially limits access and increases response time in an emergency.

Throughout the inspection, it was reported that youth had limited access to clinical services via DMH. It was reported that due to a single staff's mismanagement of a facility key, DMH was no longer welcome to check out the facility "A keys" needed to access units and offices needed to provide their full scope of services. It was not shared when DMH lost this privilege outside of acknowledgments that this happened since the re-opening of Los Padrinos and that it was not an issue at Central Juvenile Hall. It was shared by DMH, youth, and Probation staff that this lack of access led to insufficient service delivery by way of "check ins" or brief conversations between clinicians and their clients in non-private spaces consisting of a few questions to ensure the current safety and non-suicidality of the young person. Various young people expressed concerns for behaviors that they observed in their peers, including sadness, self-isolating, and poor hygiene which they were able to identify as mental health issues in need of appropriate treatment. Since the re-opening of Los Padrinos, no rehabilitative group services were

delivered to youth despite the specific inclusion of these programs on the programming calendars which Probation informed the POC were listed as a “placeholder.”

Programs and Services

Commissioners and staff reviewed the Los Padrinos facility calendars including one created by Probation and one created by the Department of Arts and Culture which were not consistent with each other. The purpose of reviewing the calendars is to allow commissioners and staff to observe programming and services during the inspection, however they were found to be substantially flawed. The monthly calendars received by the commission were filled with programs and services delivered by Probation, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), LACOE and DMH. Probation leadership, staff, co-located county partners, and youth alike reported a lack of appropriate rehabilitative programming and services. It was reported on the day of the inspection that all the DMH group services scheduled on the calendar had not been delivered since the re-opening of Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall and that the timeslots were just on the calendar as “placeholders.” The missing services that had not been delivered since the re-opening of Los Padrinos included topics such as group substance abuse services, coping skills, and evidence-based treatments that address the long-term effects of trauma. It was reported that individual substance abuse services may occur individually with a youth’s assigned clinician. After reviewing the calendars, it was noted that no other scheduled services were identified as substance use disorder focused services, leaving a gap in addressing this critical need of the young people in the facility.

While in a unit housing mostly youth over the age of 18, the young people adamantly and clearly and expressed urgency to resolve the lack of programming as they thought that this was causing most of the issues and incidents including those related to fighting and vandalism inside the units. The young people expressed wanting rehabilitation, by not only learning new ways to cope with distressing mental health symptoms, but also learning non-perishable skills that would benefit them by leading to employment opportunities upon release. One young person asked for “programming at least three times a week”, which included a desire for art, music, and trades.

Youth and staff alike made multiple mentions of issues with DMH services. Various youth reported that they did not have the chance to interact with their clinicians in private spaces where they could discuss sensitive topics, others reported that their therapists only drop into the unit to briefly check in with them by asking if they are okay. It was reported that some clinicians did not come into the units because they are scared for their safety, and it was also reported that DMH clinicians are not allowed access to the keys that they need to independently access the units or to exit the units if needed. Staff reported that, in addition to decreased DMH services, some CBOs that used to come to Central Juvenile Hall dropped off when the youth were moved to Los Padrinos. Young people stated that “there is nothing to do on the weekends,” and that the current programming was inconsistent as some CBOs only “showed up once” to Los Padrinos.

On one unit, commissioners spoke with the young people while Probation staff were assisting a Bureau Chief and their team who were setting up tables and snacks in the recreation area to conduct a new mentoring program called the “Anchor Program”, in which a Probation Bureau Chief adopts a unit at Los Padrinos and visits the unit regularly for mentoring. This meant that regularly scheduled programming had been cancelled. The commissioners walked outside to the recreation area to observe this program. It was reported that the chief and their team would meet with one side of the building and then the other, so the young people could come in small groups to participate. The young people were confused, and some expressed concerns that they would be excluded but eventually it appeared that all youth were able to participate.

During a visit to a unit, commissioners asked youth about a cooking class listed on the program schedule, and the young people replied, “we wish...”, indicating that they had never participated in a cooking class. They did mention that an art teacher and a teacher from WriteGirl are the only ones that come regularly. The youth reported:

“Everything happens in this day room, we have no TV, only the [other] side has a TV... There has been literally no programming, until today... We don’t know if it was because of you, but today they painted everything, they gave us pillows, and said that we had visitors coming so we had to clean up.”

When asked further about the pillows, youth mentioned that they had been requesting them for weeks.

Agency Relationships

Reports about the relationships and partnerships with co-located county departments were mixed. LACOE leadership reported satisfaction with the current progress and collaboration with Probation and were hopeful for more regular communication with Probation leadership. LACOE staff shared that there were interagency meetings occurring every 2 to 3 weeks, which offered a platform to work together and discuss student progress. LACOE staff also recommended that role clarification and reminders that all agencies were working together toward a common goal would benefit the partnerships.

DMH employees reported that clinical staff had issues accessing the young people due to a variety of issues that had arisen losing the right to check out keys needed to access buildings and unit offices. There was no indication of a plan or partnership process to remedy the issue. It was mentioned that the agency collaboration at Central Juvenile Hall between Probation and DMH was better, and that the relationship was now more strained at Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall. DMH leadership noted that communication was a larger barrier than in the past since channels of communication with Probation leaders were now being filtered through assigned liaisons. DMH leadership expressed feeling “hopeful” as they had recently been given the name of their Probation point of contact who would address their concerns that remained unanswered in emails to the facility superintendent. In addition, DMH leadership informed the POC that they had a meeting earlier that day with Probation to initiate DMH group services for substance use disorders which had not occurred since the move to Los Padrinos. Probation and DMH staff alike cited issues related to challenging communication amongst agencies, security concerns, and low DMH staffing as contributing factors to the partnership concerns.

JCHS informed commissioners that their leadership staff recently started working at Los Padrinos and were not aware of how the relationships were working before. JCHS leadership shared their sense of satisfaction with overall agency collaboration with Probation despite multiple reports that their staff report not feeling safe or supported enough on the units to deliver services there.

Oleoresin Capsicum Spray Use

On July 28, 2023, there was a major disturbance at Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall that resulted in a declared state of emergency by then Interim Chief Viera Rosa. An order was issued that all staff at Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall had the option to be issued Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) spray, including those newer staff that were never previously issued spray. Since then, and through the day of the inspection, OC spray was in use at Los Padrinos. On the day of the inspection, staff in all units had OC spray and were permitted to use it, including in units designated to house youth with developmental disabilities, histories of commercial sexual exploitation, girls, and gender expansive youth. This continued despite previous direction from the Board of Supervisors and previous commitments made by Probation to eliminate OC use on these units and a public commitment to not bring OC to Los Padrinos as a use of

force intervention. The reissuance of OC spray at the end of July 2023 was stated as a temporary solution, however on the date of the inspection over two months later, there was no new phase out plan known to the leadership or staff at the facility.

Probation's most recent phase out plan indicated that OC spray would be fully eliminated from all of Probation's facilities on January 31, 2024. That plan has seemingly been abandoned and reports by Chief Viera Rosa indicate that a new phase out plan would be developed and shared publicly in November 2023.

On the day of the inspection, one unit's staff indicated that they did not rely on OC Spray, stating that they used their relationship building and de-escalation skills with young people to manage tense situations. On another unit, staff and youth reported that some staff regularly threaten to use OC Spray during tense situations, which increased the youth's agitation rather than calm it down. Probation staff mentioned that their colleagues' threats to use OC spray as a de-escalation tool often led to escalation of incidents, many of which ended in a deployment of OC spray.

When asked about OC Spray, some young people stated that because of staffing issues, they were concerned for their safety and therefore not opposed to the ongoing use of OC spray. Multiple young people indicated that some staff were unwilling or unable to assist in de-escalating or breaking up physical fights, so OC spray as an intervention to protect their safety became more accepted by youth. Other youth reported that at times there are not enough staff in the unit to break up any fights that included more than two youth. The young people shared that because there were so few staff in the units regularly, OC spray was the "only help staff have to stop people from getting jumped."