



LOS ANGELES COUNTY

PROBATION OVERSIGHT COMMISSION

2024 ANNUAL INSPECTION REPORT

LOS PADRINOS JUVENILE HALL



LOS PADRINOS
JUVENILE HALL
ENTRANCE

JUNE
2024



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 2024 Annual Inspections of all of Probation's detention facilities, marking the fourth year of inspections.

The POC has found it of critical importance to provide substantial and timely feedback to Probation, the Board of Supervisors (Board), and public stakeholders after each inspection of the conditions observed within the facilities. This summary presents the key findings from the inspection of Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall (LPJH).

- **Overpopulation, violence, and volatility in some units** – Units housing general, age-grouped populations were close to or at capacity, cramping more than 20 youth into dayrooms less than half the size of the day rooms in other buildings. Concerning reports of racial tensions, violence, and regular use of Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) spray emerged from these units. Youth from various units were observed throughout the day with obvious signs of injuries including casts for broken and fractured hands and arms, swollen, bruised eyes, and other facial bruising.
- **Girls' Needs Unmet** – The majority of the girls detained at Los Padrinos have serious mental health concerns, traumatic histories, involvement in the child welfare system, or are victims of child sex trafficking. They need intensive care and healing opportunities in a therapeutic environment and Unit P/Q does not provide that. Pregnant, nursing, and parenting girls were detained on the day of the inspection, continuing the cycle of systemic harm onto a new generation.
- **Improvements in Professional Partnerships** – Increased constructive communication and regular meetings between Probation and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) resulted in significant improvements in serving youth compared to what was found during the October 2023 inspection. The installation of a specialized substance abuse provider via the Department of Public Health– Substance Abuse Prevention and Control (DPH-SAPC) was a notable and positive expansion into new partnership at the facility.
- **Insufficient Programming and Inaccurate Schedules** – Commissioners attempting to observe programming based on Probation's calendar found that while programs scheduled to be led by Community Based Organizations (CBO) and Credible Messengers mostly occurred as planned, Probation-led programs such as "Mobile Library" were neither occurring nor known to officers or youth. One unit had no programming scheduled for the day.

- **Too Many Substitutes in Place of Long-Term Relationships** – In the absence of regularly assigned Probation officers and teachers, youth must repeatedly adjust to new people passing through the spaces where they live and learn, depending on people they may never see again, and adding to the institutionalized experience of LPJH. Many deployed Probation officers are faced with the daily challenge of attempting to build rapport with youth, while attempting to create teamwork and safety amongst staff they do not know. This has reportedly contributed to the occurrence of violence in the facility. LACOE’s dependence on substitute teachers in place of regularly assigned teachers creates similar instability within the classroom environment.
- **Disorganized and Inconsistent Approaches to Supervision and Facility Planning** – While facility staffing appeared more robust than the previous year, officers reported issues with the way leadership utilized and prepared their assigned and deployed human resources. Inconsistent approaches, rules, and strategies emphasize the need for the department-wide adoption of a trauma-informed practice model to unify approaches to the work. There was no known plan or progress to install a behavioral model, despite that being stated by Probation leadership as a goal. It was reported that no steps have been taken to divide the facility into smaller “communities” as previously shared by Probation leadership.

Findings from this inspection differ only slightly from the POC’s 2023 Annual Inspection of LPJH,¹ and facility culture continues to be at the core of each concern. The improvement in partnerships is significant and will positively benefit youth and officers at the facility. However, a lack of plans and effort to unify practice and address the culture of violence at the facility continue to make creation of a Care-First environment at this facility a challenge.

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 Board of Supervisors (Board) and the Los Angeles County Probation Department (Probation) about progress and challenges within Probation. The POC has considerable authority and responsibilities directly related to juvenile institutions. Specifically, Title 15 of the California Code of Regulations, section 1313 (f), 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 Board also granted the POC specific authority to “as permitted by law... conduct unannounced inspections of any facility, and its non-confidential records, where any juvenile probationer can be held or where probationers receive services and “prepare reports on inspection findings” for the Board (LACC Sections 3.80.040(B) and 3.80.050(A)). 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 31st each year and shares the report with Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and the public. This report marks the fourth round of annual inspections conducted by this body.

¹ [2023 Annual Inspection Report: Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall](#)

METHODS

At the beginning of the 2024 Annual Inspection cycle, Probation ran six juvenile facilities: one juvenile detention center (a juvenile hall named “Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall”), three juvenile camps, one locked placement that also serves as the camp and SYTF facility for girls and gender expansive youth, and two facilities solely dedicated to housing young people dispositioned to Secure Youth Treatment Facilities (SYTF), including Barry J. Nidorf- SYTF and Campus Kilpatrick.

For the Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall (LPJH) Inspection:

- Four POC Commissioners conducted the inspection. Two POC staff members provided support during the inspection.
- Dates for the inspections were coordinated with Probation leadership and leaders from the facility and partner agencies were aware of the inspection in advance.
- The BSCC does not have a required template for the inspection report. The POC developed a detailed facility inspection template that was updated this year and reviewed by Probation and the BSCC.
- The POC’s inspections template includes key themes to ensure a thorough inspection of both physical structure and environment. The template also highlights the need to examine practices and the treatment of youth at the facility.
- The LPJH inspection took nine hours to complete.

The information below depicts data gathered directly from the LPJH inspection on June 3, 2024. It should be noted that the data is a “snapshot” of information recorded on 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 the facility’s Director or Administrative Director (AD) and these numbers were directly included in this report. The only two datapoints requiring calculation 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.



FINDINGS

Inspection #3 - Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall (LPJH): 7285 East Quill Drive, Downey CA 90242

Facility Rated Capacity: 409²

Youth Population (Physical)- Co-Ed	Youth at Court/ Medical	Total Staff (Payroll)	Total Active Staff ³ (DPO'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 Teachers (LACOE)	Number of Middle ⁴ / High School Students	Number of High School Graduates
272	25	526	304	1:1	102-AM, 104-PM	23 ⁵	238	44

Access to Medical and Mental Health Services

Juvenile Court Health Services (JCHS)	Services Offered: 7 days / week	Coverage: 24 hours, 7 days/week
Department of Mental Health (DMH)	Services Offered: 7 days / week	Coverage: 8:00 AM - 8:00 PM plus 24-hour access to on-call DMH psychiatrist

FACILITY AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The entrance to LPJH is a double door entry way that opens immediately to a conveyor belt scanner where POC commissioners and staff passed all belongings through. The security officers tending the x-ray machine were observed asking all staff and visitors entering to put their belongings on the belt 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 where the majority of special visits for youth with their attorneys, social workers, or others occur. Since the last inspection, a set of four connected privacy pods were installed along one of the walls of the chapel in order to provide private space and to cut down on the wait times that have repeatedly been raised as a problem since the reopening of LPJH. POC staff reviewed attorney visit logs. Since May 14, 2024, attorneys had been signing

² This rated capacity was provided by LPJH facility leadership on the day of the inspection and confirmed by a BSCC representative, while Probation's [Los Padrinos web page](#) (6/12/24) reports the facility rated capacity at 603.

³ Probation's reports of Active Staff and Line Staff on Duty includes individuals with work hardening, or light duty.

⁴ There were 14 middle school students on the day of inspection included in the 238-student count, including two seventh graders and 12 eighth graders.

⁵ Seven Teachers were full-time, regularly assigned teachers and 16 were substitute teachers.

in at the lobby with their time of entry. They sign in again at the chapel and the time that their meeting starts is logged. Prior to May 14, 2024, however, there was no way to measure the waiting times in the lobby and therefore no way to verify the complaints about attorney wait times. POC staff reviewed 12 random attorney visits between May 14th and 30th, and found all wait times to be shorter than 20 minutes. LPJH leadership reported that another grouping of four pods were ordered to line the opposite wall of the chapel to allow for more visits and shorter waits in the future.

LPJH is comprised of a variety of living units constructed during varying decades and with different priorities in mind. The most recently built units, while substantially larger than the older units, typically held fewer youth than the smaller, older units. Rooms in the newer buildings are “wet rooms”, meaning they contain a toilet and sink in addition to a bed. The newer units were observed by commissioners and staff to overall be a calm experience. The youth on those units mostly reported a sense of stability and were observed to have sufficient space between themselves and staff to be able to move around freely, and even play. There were multiple televisions and gaming consoles seen on these units, and it was also observed that one or more youth were using the telephone each time. One unit had an elliptical machine, and another had a basketball hoop.

At least three of the older units were at or very close to maximum capacity on the day of the inspection. According to youth and Probation officers alike, high population, turnover of youth, and cramped quarters often contributed to tensions and violence on these units reportedly not experienced at the same rates elsewhere in the facility. Two youth interviewed who had been in the facility for a month observed that to them, LPJH was a jail and that they were there to be punished for their mistakes. They did not think the institution was meant for rehabilitation and reflected that they accepted that punishment was the obvious purpose of the facility. For example, one youth reported that his unit was not allowed to have time “down in rooms” for months because of a lack of staffing. Youth housed in these older units felt that the youth culture had not been addressed by those in charge nor improved in any way and that they lived with a constant threat of violence. Various youth on these older units reported fights breaking out in front of them on a near-weekly basis and various uses of force including Oleoresin Capsicum spray (OC spray; see section below).

Despite the difference in the layouts and tone of the boy’s units, it was observed throughout the day in separate units that many youth appeared to have violence-related injuries. Four youth were observed to have casts and arm slings, all of whom reported that the injury and resulting care took place during detention. On one unit, a youth was interviewed with a bruised, swollen eye. Throughout the day, various others were seen with facial bruising indicative of the high levels of violence occurring within the facility. Throughout interviews with youth who had injuries, POC staff and commissioners asked youth about circumstances of their injuries, recovery, and current sense of safety. While many reported fighting with other youth, some declined to discuss their injuries⁶. Multiple youth throughout the day reported that

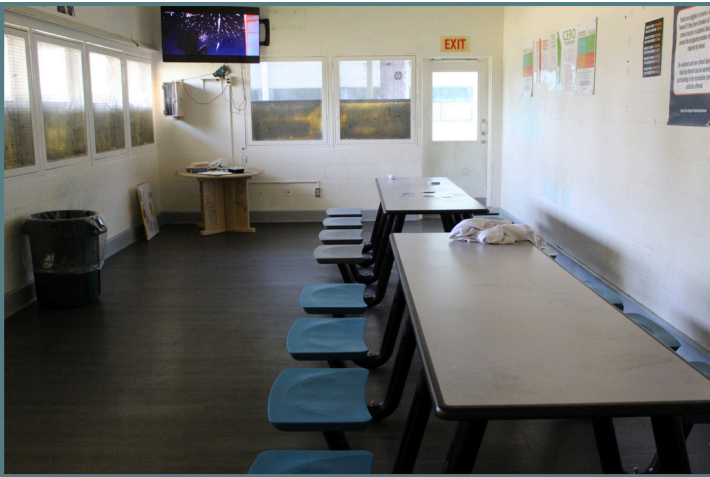
⁶ POC staff members are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse. No interviews conducted during the day of the inspection resulted in a suspected child abuse report.

there was a racial component to the violence they had been involved in or witnessed over the last several months. On one unit, one Black youth shared that he perceived staff as showing racial favoritism to Latino youth. He shared examples of times where his requests for something are denied, but the same requests are honored when made by Latino youth.

The girls' unit was also in one of the older buildings. All of the girls are housed in the same building, regardless of age and needs, divided between two sides of the building. This includes general population girls in a wide age range, Girls Care, and the Girls' Enhanced Supervision Unit (ESU). POC staff and commissioners noted that on both sides of the unit girls exhibited distress and signs of mental health concerns, including a youth who self-separated instead of joining the rest for lunch, youth disrupting lunch service with loud concerns about medical needs, food allergies and dislikes, and girls clearly in conflict with each other. A particularly young-appearing girl had adorned herself with a handmade bow that she fashioned out of discarded red tissue paper in an attempt to make a good impression for a placement interview that could get her out of LPJH that day. Also present on the unit were a pregnant girl and a lactating mother. It was noted that on one side of the girls' unit the walls were not decorated or friendly looking like some other units. Commissioners noted that lunch was served slowly while staff attempted to multi-task, supervising girls washing up and addressing and supervising the youth who did not want to leave her room. On one side of the unit, Commissioners were concerned to witness a meeting occurring between a girl and her DMH clinician in the open day room in earshot of other youth and visitors. A commissioner asked about it and the clinician moved the girl into an available office.

Throughout the living units, informational posters were visible and mostly at eye level reminding youth of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), Youth Bill of Rights, and Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR) Ombudsperson. These posters were also observed in areas youth may occasionally visit within the facility, including intake and medical, but were noticeably absent from the school administrative offices and classrooms visited. On each living unit, locked boxes for grievances, mental health and nursing self-referrals were functional and had available forms available for youth to submit.





STAFFING

LPJH has made strides in addressing ongoing issues with low staffing by requiring the deployment of Deputy Probation Officer II's (DPOIIs) from field offices across the county. Throughout the inspection, deployed officers shared that they were told they would be deployed for a finite period, including three who stated that their deployment was slated to end in the coming week. One deployed officer reported that he had some level of stability of working on the same unit nearly every day of the deployment and was able to form positive rapport with both the youth and colleagues on that unit. On yet another unit, a deployed DPOII reported that he was moved nearly every day and was working for the first time on the unit where he was interviewed. He shared that he knew neither the names of his colleagues nor youth on the unit but was willing to do what was possible to provide supervision under such circumstances. It appeared that the facility continues to have staffing challenges resulting from unexpected call outs resulting in insufficiency officer to youth staffing ratios. While staffing anecdotally looked more robust unit by unit than it did at the 2023 Annual Inspection of LPJH, interviews with officers on the units indicated that holdovers remain a common occurrence, and many officers were there voluntarily working overtime.

An additional improvement noted by various co-located departments was the reduced presence of Special Enforcement Operations (SEO) officers. It was reported that SEO officers were only present on the PM shift which takes place from 2-10pm. LACOE shared that having the school movements coordinated once again by non-SEO decreased incidents in the mornings and may have had a role in youth regularly getting to and starting school on time. Antagonistic interactions between SEO and youth reportedly continued since the last Annual Inspection of LPJH. Various youth interviewed reported that they viewed SEO (often referred to by youth as "the men in black") as wanting to "start stuff," referring to arguments or wanting to exert authority over youth through exchanges where youth will ultimately need to comply with their orders despite communicating in ways that youth find disrespectful or offensive.

POC asked facility leadership if they could speak to any specific steps taken to address concerns of violent facility culture since a widely publicized video was released of an incident at the facility in which eight Probation officers allegedly coordinated or failed to stop the repeated beating of one youth by various others. While facility leadership reported that the eight officers involved were no longer at the facility, it was also communicated that no other additional specific actions were planned by Probation to address the issue of officer facilitated violence widely as prevention. It was reported that youth are informed of the grievance process upon orientation to the facility.

ROOM CONFINEMENT/HOPE CENTER

Commissioners did not note any instances of room confinement during the inspection.



GRIEVANCES

There were 431 grievances filed for the period of January 1, 2024, through June 2, 2024. Due to the time constraints of completing a thorough inspection in a single day, three commissioners split the grievances from the months of April and May 2024 for review. Some of those grievances involved concerns for physical safety on living units, programming, condition of the facility, visitation, requesting a rosary and other religious services, and dietary needs. Some grievances seemed to be incomplete, with the questionnaire for the physical intervention report being totally blank, others appeared superficially investigated and responded to; indicating that an issue was “resolved” due to the youth’s release. Multiple grievances reviewed were not addressed within three business days as indicated as the standard in Probation policy⁷.

It was also noted by one commissioner that there was an anonymized grievance stating that the writer had been touched inappropriately by a Probation officer on the unit. The response documented in the grievance folder indicated that all youth in the unit were simply asked to sign a document describing whether they had experienced inappropriate behavior from an adult. It was noted that most youth wrote “No” and that Probation wrote “Refused” for those who did not sign. It was noted by the commissioner that there was no further effort described to document review of video or the occurrence of any meaningful engagement of youth to ensure their well-being.



DISCIPLINE AND POSITIVE BEHAVIOR REINFORCEMENT

During the inspection, LPJH reported using a Behavior Management Program (BMP), which is a points-based reward system in which youth are assigned points throughout the day via their participation in various activities and prosocial behaviors like avoiding fights and verbal altercations. With the points earned through the BMP, youth are able to “purchase” snack foods and name brand personal care items that youth find highly desirable. In addition to these tangible rewards, youth with the highest points are occasionally invited to participate in a movie screening within the BMP store, replete with popcorn and sport drinks.

⁷ [LosAngelesCountyProbation-Youth Grievances Procedures \(revised\)](#).

Over the last year, Probation leadership has referenced the installation of a “behavioral model” for their facilities, including LPJH. Questions were posed throughout the day to various Probation officers and facility leadership regarding information they may have about a plan to install a behavioral model, what that model is called, or what it might entail. No one was able to elaborate on a plan, name, or information about the installation of a new behavioral model beyond BMP. Facility leadership reported awareness of previous discussions to divide the facility into smaller, focused communities, but reported there had been no further discussion or planning processes toward that goal in months.



Throughout the day in the interviews conducted with Probation officers and youth alike it was clear that a wide range of behaviors between Probation officers exists when it comes to interactions with youth. Many youth interviewed had at least one Probation employee they could reference in a positive way, and various officers spoke to commissioners about their approach to the work being rooted in their desire to help young people by building mutually respectful relationships and fostering honest communication. It was clear through observations that there are numerous officers that repeatedly meaningfully engage youth, repeatedly de-escalate tensions, and create opportunities for positive rapport. It was also clear that the individual officers approaching the work in this way were doing so out of a personal motivation and not a clear communicated strategy or expectation that all officers adopt, as numerous observations were made throughout the day of practice behaviors across units throughout the day. There was no evidence of progress in this area since identical findings were made at the 2023 Annual Inspection of LPJH.

SCHOOL

There were 23 classrooms operating on the day of the inspection. The classrooms were run by 7 full-time teachers with 16 substitute teachers, including a handful described as long-term substitutes that had been filling in for a month or more. There were 238 youth in school on the day of the inspection which included 14 youth in middle school: two in seventh grade and 12 in eighth grade. It was reported that classrooms averaged 12 youth each and that classrooms did not mix youth from different units. LACOE reported some issues with not being able to group youth according to grade level or other needs but acknowledged that having youth attend school with their unit peers caused a decrease in violence and other disruptive incidents at school. There were four youth suspended on the day of the inspection, which took place on a Monday. It was clarified that all four were suspended on Friday and two were returning from suspension for afternoon classes.

At LPJH, school movement starts at 8:05AM Monday through Friday, to ensure that all youth that leave their units for school arrive in a timely way. The officer in charge of coordinating the facility's school movements reported that all units are moved one at a time to have all students in their seat by 8:30AM to have all classes started as expected. A POC commissioner and staff observed one boys' classroom with seven youth in class and five adult professionals including a long-term general education substitute

teacher, a special education teacher, a Foster Youth Specialist Counselor, a tutor, and a Probation officer. There was lots of individual attention paid to students due to the high number of professionals in the classroom. The worksheet being done appeared to be of grade level standard⁸. Some youth appeared to have difficulty with the math and metric system questions and were therefore each working with the adults in the room, with the exception of the Probation officer. One youth pulled out a set of cards when they finished their worksheet but was quickly told by the teacher that cards are considered school contraband. One youth appeared to give up on completing the worksheet and was playing cards with the other youth who ignored earlier direction put the cards away. The Probation officer in the class did not engage with any student or other professionals in the room at any point. Only one youth in the class complained about school, the others appeared engaged and learning. One youth reported that he was detained for approximately one month and reported that he had earned at least seven credits since coming to the facility in late April 2024.

At the girl's school, two LACOE substitutes struggled to instruct the class. They received some guidance from the girls about what they were supposed to be doing. There were eight girls in the classroom. An APEX student in the class was trying to complete a unit and was frustrated with the substitutes not knowing how to guide the class. DMH removed a student who arrived to LPJH the night before for a brief assessment. One girl in the class was sitting on the counter instead of at a desk and talking back to the teacher. She was upset when she didn't get a handout. Instead of attempting any type of a redirection or even making eye contact with the student, the teacher stated "restructure," asking Probation to take her out of the classroom. The DSO outside the classroom was a member of the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) with the school unit. She conducted an extremely successful restructure, learning that the youth was nervous and anxious about a court appointment later that afternoon and convincing her to respectfully return to the classroom and participate. In speaking with the DSO afterwards, she reported having training in de-escalation from an outside agency that she found helpful and in three months learned on-the-job how to do restructures. POC staff and commissioners were impressed by the level of assistance and de-escalation provided by the officer and commended their skills to Probation leadership. In another girls' classroom, students were observed laughing appropriately, quietly working, and engaged. The teacher was also a substitute and had the regular special education teacher in the classroom.

Units with self-contained classrooms were also visited including one where students were in with one teacher, one substitute, and a paraprofessional. They were doing packets and reportedly had not been allowed to watch the news as they were accustomed to starting with because the substitute did not know how to access it. Youth reported that they were supposed to have P.E. that day, but often did not get to go out to P.E. On another unit, there was only one high school student who was working with a substitute teacher in the day room. POC commissioners were told that the teacher did not want to work with the student in the classroom due to safety concerns and that Probation could not afford to put a DSO in the classroom with only one student.

⁸ The findings within this paragraph were gathered and expressed by Commissioner Sean Garcia-Leys whose professional training and experience as a teacher enabled the determination regarding grade level work.

It was reported by LACOE and youth that young people missing class due to short Probation staffing is an issue that has been resolved for months such that LACOE administrators could not recall the last time the issue had occurred. It was reported by youth in one classroom that one morning they had class in the unit due to a classroom door being broken but were able to return for class at school later in the afternoon.

There were 44 high school graduates in the facility during the inspection. There was recently a wrap up of a dual enrollment program that happened with Cerritos College. 17 youth participated in the dual enrollment program, but it was reported that due to youth being released from detention, eight students finished the term. Probation Education Services staff reported that they were unsure if a summer dual enrollment program would happen and were awaiting communication from the college. Students reported concerns about their ability to successfully complete their college classes. They reported that they do their on-line coursework on LACOE computers, and only in the dayroom when Probation Education staff come in with the computers, which was confirmed by Probation. They reported that they often have trouble accessing videos and research that they need because of the filters on the computers and have to “guess” on the answers to questions.



KITCHEN AND FOOD

POC commissioners and staff observed multiple meals on different units throughout the day. All meals were observed taking place in the day rooms of the living units. In one instance, youth were eating during Credible Messenger programming. Youth were allowed to converse with one another at all mealtimes observed. Probation officers were present and supervising the meals, and servings appeared ample. Youth shared differing opinions about their level of satisfaction with the food overall, so it was difficult to broadly label the food served as appetizing, good, or bad. At one meal, youth were seen eating pizza with tater tots, and another meal was tacos and fruit. While the meals may not have appeared nutritious to commissioners who noted a lack of fresh food in the pizza/tater tot meal, it was remarked that the food offered appeared familiar to youth, appeared age-appropriate, and was consumed. It was also observed that a special diet was provided for a nursing mother in the facility.

The kitchen at LPJH was inspected and observed to be clean though small. Kitchen staff reported their approach to teamwork to accomplish their daily work since they lost staff in the midst of the population steadily rising over the last several months. The staff working at LPJH were previously working at Central Juvenile Hall prior to its closure, which they reported had a much larger kitchen. They reported the main challenge with having less space is that they must now order supplies every other day since they do not have storage space to accommodate any more. While visiting the kitchen, a commissioner observed that two sinks in the kitchen were labeled "Out of order". Kitchen staff shared that they had reported the issues previously and were awaiting maintenance to fix the issue.

ACCESS TO MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Department of Mental Health reported that clinicians aim to meet with youth on their assigned caseload weekly or more often pending mental health referrals received indicating a more urgent need for attention. This also included monitoring youth in their units at specific intervals (daily, every three days, etc.) if the youth are on "Enhanced Supervision". On the day of the inspection, there were 22 clinicians, many of whom were reportedly new hires, replacing many of the clinicians that left in the 10 months since the move from Central Juvenile Hall to LPJH occurred. The DMH program manager reported that there are soon to be 31 clinicians in the facility within approximately three months pending human resources clearances. Concerns were expressed by DMH leadership that when fully staffed, there will not be sufficient office space on the units for clinicians. There are currently designated locations for individual therapy sessions within every living unit which is typically one office allocated to DMH, however it was observed during the inspection that the office space is not consistently occupied or used for therapy. Few clinicians were actually seen using the offices on the day of the inspection. Concern was expressed by DMH that when they eventually have more clinicians than units there will be some overflow, since office space is a major concern in the facility. During the inspection, it was observed by a commissioner that a DMH provider was facilitating a session in an open hallway, with several people walking by. There was no privacy, and it was unclear to commissioners why the session was not conducted in a private space. One commissioner noted that eventually they moved location to continue the session.

DMH leadership reported that family therapy sessions are happening minimally at the facility, and it was estimated that approximately 5% of youth in the facility have family therapy sessions. DMH reported that family therapy could help many youth in the facility and would like to considerably increase the number of youth that receive family therapy sessions. There was no clear plan shared to do so, but the plan to increase the number of clinicians was identified as a step in reaching that goal. DMH shared that there are various resources that could also be used to facilitate more family engagement, such as the use of tablets, offering transportation, or gas vouchers, but at the current time, there were no shareable plans.

There are designated DMH staff to provide crisis mental health intervention within the facility which is called the "Mental Health Officer of the Day" however it was recognized by DMH leadership that best practice would be to have the assigned unit clinician assist a young person in the mental health crisis if needed. The difficulty in accomplishing this is that it was noted on various units that all mental health clinicians do not spend their entire shift on their assigned units. On these units, there were complaints about the lack of DMH presence and partnership. Some clinicians were reported to spend the majority of their day on the assigned unit, and it was reported by youth and Probation officers that the resulting relationships and rapport built was excellent due to clinician accessibility. During interviews, Probation officers showed familiarity with both medical and mental health referral processes and supporting youth to ask for help from co-located partners. As of January 2024, DMH initiated a partnership process where the DMH supervisor and the Probation director of each unit meet with one another regularly to collaborate discuss various partnership issues, lifting up any issues that need to be resolved between the two departments in order to serve youth.

Since the previous inspection of LPJH, JCHS was able to move the last of the medical equipment that was kept at Central Medical Hub to LPJH, including an operational X-ray machine and four Pixus machines for automated medication disbursement. This consolidation is an improvement from last year's inspections because having the machine at the facility should cut down on the wait time for getting youth medical attention and will result in fewer cancelled appointments. It was reported that since the equipment was moved, youth now only leave LPJH for external appointments with specialists. One nurse was observed providing triage to a youth in their living unit and shared that triage on the units is only being done occasionally, and generally youth have to be brought to the medical unit for triage. Nurses typically visit the units for teaching and counseling. At the June 15, 2023, Pre-Inspection of LPJH, plans were reported for Unit J, a small walled off unit positioned close to the administrative building, would eventually be used as a medical unit due to limited space for JCHS. It was reported during this inspection that Unit A is now in use as medical and is preferred to Unit J because it is closer to the other medical area and considered by staff to be "nicer".

JCHS related that while they view Probation's staffing as improved, concerns still persist due to instances of delayed transportation to the Emergency Room and some issues getting youth to specialty appointments. JCHS staff also reflected serious concerns about youth getting injured in fights caused by the overall lack of supervision occurring throughout the facility.

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

The LPJH Programs and Services monthly calendar was provided ahead of the inspection and confirmed to be the most current updated schedule on the day of the inspection. It was observed that there was no scheduled programming for unit X1 for that day. The calendar provided for the inspection showed 17 instances of units having no scheduled programming daily per week. For the month of June 2024, this would result in 72 instances during the month that a unit would have no programming for the day.

During the inspection, POC Commissioners and staff took the opportunity to audit programming that was occurring. On one of the boys' units, ARC showed up approximately one hour later than scheduled. The program facilitator noted that they are at the facility at the scheduled time, but usually spend the first hour in the office doing paperwork and emails. The scheduled program was successfully conducted but should be reflected appropriately in the programming schedule. The topic of the credible messenger's program was emotion regulation. Worksheets were provided explaining what emotion regulation was, posing questions about how youth view their emotions, emotional triggers, relationship with emotions, etc. The youth were engaged in the discussion and answered the questions. At one point the ARC credible messenger mentioned advocating for one of the youth by speaking to their lawyer, an example of how a provider can do more than just provide programming.

In the girls' unit, a commissioner observed that a credible messenger was not interacting with the youth but rather was sitting with a Probation officer. At the same time, multiple girls in the unit were observed in apparent need of de-escalation support while they were banging at the windows and yelling threats to other girls outside during their recreation time.

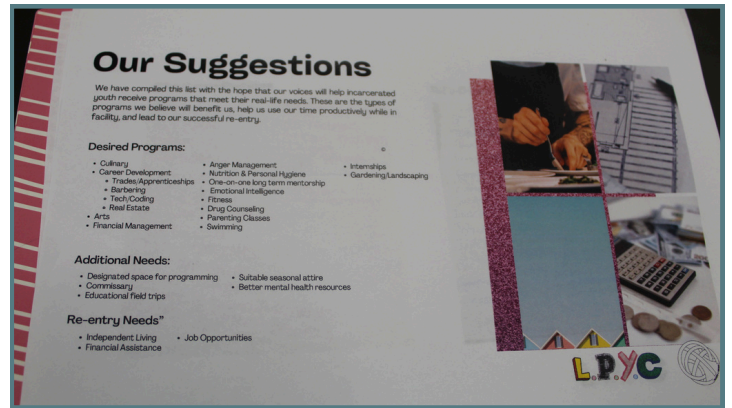
On one unit, students reported that OSHA program came in earlier in the morning (this program was not listed on the schedule) and that they enjoy that program and are looking forward to getting certified. Students reported that the Student Nest program did not come in (scheduled 9-12 on the calendar) because they were on break from college, however staff reported that they did come in for a very short time and then left. It remained unclear which was correct, and if so, what service was provided during any brief visit.

Three programs listed on the calendar for the afternoon named "Mobile Library" and "Library" were new to commissioners. POC Commissioners and staff attempted to observe these programs to learn what they were. Officers and youth confirmed that the only library received was during the school day, through LACOE. There was no afternoon programming connected to the library known to the units. Upon visiting the units with Mobile Library, on one unit neither the youth nor the staff had any idea what Mobile Library programming was. The officers of the other unit with the Mobile Library scheduled said that during this time, youth were invited to pick a book off of a cart. The officers clarified that youth were always welcomed to grab a book regardless of Mobile Library programming. Commissioners remarked that essentially, these three units also received no programming on this day. Commissioners noted significant concern about Probation-led programming scheduled to occur in the evening as potential placeholders rather than real activities.

Youth observed in units N/O seemed particularly restless. Youth were observed lifting trash bags filled with water to work out and various others paced around those watching various televisions and seated at tables in the dayroom. All youth interviewed in that unit reported that recreation was happening inconsistently. Youth complained that options during recreation were limited, and that the only activity was basketball. If youth were interested in soccer or some other sport, balls were not available to youth and/or staff weren't willing to have kids play on the grass.

The youth on most units reported having recreation time outside every day, though in some units youth reported that recreation time outside was often shortened to less than an hour without explanation. Youth from at least two units reported not getting to go outside for recreation each day. Probation officers interviewed on those units reported that recreation time is usually offered.

One group of boys was observed playing flag football. The staff were incredibly engaged and seen warming up with the kids and coaching plays.



HARM PREVENTION PROGRAMMING AND INTERVENTIONS

Interviews with Probation officers and youth indicated that contraband continues to be an issue at the facility despite efforts to increase searches and security. Reports indicated that contraband issues are uneven across the living units. A JCHS nurse reported that tightened security has led to fewer overdoses and fewer youth appearing intoxicated in the last several months. It was shared anecdotally throughout the day by officers, co-located providers and youth that contraband items such as vape pens and chargers are the more common contraband items related to illicit substances.

It was reported by facility leadership that since the last formal inspection in October 2023, three doses of Narcan, a life-saving opioid overdose reversal medication, were deployed in two incidents. Narcan was seen in each living unit and in areas of the facility that youth access. During the inspection, five of the 12 Probation officers asked about Narcan carried it on their person. Most officers indicated that the nearest Narcan supply was available in the lock box with the unit defibrillator or in a locked office. Youth at LPJH do not have access to Narcan, have not been trained to deploy Narcan, nor receive education to recognize signs of opioid intoxication or overdose. Substance abuse providers reported that they have asked Probation multiple times to outline a process that would allow them to be able to carry Narcan in the facility as a safety precaution, since they are trained professionals who could readily identify opioid intoxication. It was reported that attempts to initiate that discussion with Probation leadership were ignored.

Both DMH and community-based organizations facilitate individual and group programming for substance abuse prevention. On the monthly programming calendar provided for the inspection, DMH continued to facilitate Seeking Safety on a limited number of units, which is an evidence-based program that addresses symptoms of post traumatic stress including substance abuse. At the inspection, it was reported that DMH now makes referrals to DPH-SAPC’s contracted provider for substance abuse services. DMH psychiatrists and JCHS pediatricians at the facility have the ability to prescribe medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for opioid addiction. POC asked for information regarding how many, if any, youth in the facility were currently prescribed MAT, but it was reported by JCHS that the information could not be determined because “some are prescribed by DMH”, meaning that no youth in the facility were currently receiving MAT derived from a JCHS prescription.

Cut down equipment was observed in all living units which is found in the centralized Probation office on each unit. There is a defibrillator in every living unit.

AGENCY RELATIONSHIPS

Ample improvement in departmental and professional relationships were reported in this inspection in comparison to the previous Annual Inspection of LPJH. DMH reported that the previous leadership upended communication in summer 2023 which disrupted partnership and any planning efforts. It was reported that significant improvements were being put in place since December 2023 at which time Probation re-opened communication at the leadership level. It was shared by DMH leadership and clinicians that they felt that collaboration was improving since the DMH supervisors were meeting weekly with Probation Directors assigned to corresponding units to consider coordinated interventions to deliver to youth on those units. LACOE reported that communication was also improved with Probation in the same timeframe. Two facility directors who function as the school liaisons

County of Los Angeles Probation Department Shared Core Values			
SCHOOL (LACOE)			
RESPONSIBILITY	SAFETY	WELLNESS	RESPECT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow all rules, instructions, and accept corrective feedback. Complete all school assignments. Stay engaged and ask for help appropriately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask for permission to leave the defined areas. Free of contraband in school* (can be adopted in the major/minor matrix). Use digital and instructional materials appropriately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and communicate your emotions/feelings constructively. Come to school mentally focused and contribute positively. Be aware of and honor boundaries and personal space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect self, all staff, peers, and property. Use appropriate language. Honor diversity.
FACILITY (PROBATION)			
RESPONSIBILITY	SAFETY	WELLNESS	RESPECT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow all rules, instructions, and accept corrective feedback. Complete all school assignments. Stay engaged and ask for help appropriately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote violence free environment. Everyone is accountable for their own actions. Help keep the environment contraband free. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take advantage of the opportunities to better yourself. Don't let your past define you. An improved version of yourself benefits you and everyone around you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be open and honest and to behave with integrity. Treat people with appreciation and dignity.
COUNSELING (DMH)			
RESPONSIBILITY	SAFETY	WELLNESS	RESPECT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect Self and Others. Communicate needs. Practice problem-solving. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express feelings appropriately. Use self-control. Avoid negative peer pressure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in MH group, level check, and Psychiatrist appointments. Participate in individual MH treatment and family sessions. Know your triggers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain physical and personal boundaries. Value other's point of view. Develop positive relationships with peers and staff.
JUVENILE COURT HEALTH SERVICES (JCHS)			
RESPONSIBILITY	SAFETY	WELLNESS	RESPECT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate health problems clearly. Cooperate with medical staff for physical exam and treatments. Understand consequences of your actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behave in non-threatening manner towards others. Avoid contraband use. Take medications as prescribed (avoid pocketing/checking) Display calm behaviors when receiving health interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work to improve your health. Provide complete health information to the best of your knowledge. Refrain from illicit substance use. Maintain proper hygiene (oral care, skin integrity) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate with normal tone and speech to others. Active listening.

were praised by LACOE due to their ongoing efforts to building respectful and positive relationships with kids. JCHS staff noted that relationships with Probation had improved over the past year with improved communications, tightened security, and improved frequency and reliability of transportation to outside appointments, although noting that staffing still has some impact on transportation.

OLEORESIN CAPSICUM SPRAY

LPJH reopened in July 2023 with a pledge from Probation Chief Viera Rosa that oleoresin capsicum spray (“OC spray” or “pepper spray”) would not be introduced at the facility. Just weeks after the reopening and a major disturbance, OC spray was made available as a use of force option for all units and populations within the facility. This included the use of spray on units housing girls, gender expansive youth, those with documented histories of commercial sexual exploitation and youth formally diagnosed with developmental disabilities, despite the 2022 Board Motion requiring termination of the use of OC spray in those units.⁹ Facility leadership and officers interviewed throughout the day reported that there was no known plan to phase out or eliminate the spray or to implement strategies to reduce the use or prevent the need for OC spray. Officers reported that OC spray was a critical intervention tool needed to operate given the current staff to youth ratios.

One youth who had been in LPJH for approximately three weeks explained how he and many others were affected by pepper spray when a fight broke out recently in the dayroom. He reported that, as usual, all youth were in the dayroom when two youth began fighting and the one officer supervising the day room tried to intervene but quickly ended up giving the OC warning and deploying spray. The youth reported that the officer did two bursts of spray but that when the youth did not stop fighting that “he sprayed it again and again”. The youth reported that the spray affected many of the 20-plus youth in the dayroom that were not involved in the fight, including himself. He described a chaotic scene, with youth trying to get out of the dayroom and away from the spray, “We were all running and coughing, and our eyes were burning.” He said that the frequency of the use of spray was a factor in his opinion that “it’s horrible here” and pointed out an orange mark on the wall that he said was a remnant of another incident of OC spray use. The youth repeatedly looked around and over his shoulder while telling his story and continuously vowed to do whatever was necessary to get out and stay away from LPJH in the future.

⁹ [Phase Out of Oleoresin Capsicum \(OC\) Spray at Central Juvenile Hall](#)