

<b>Agency Name</b>	Sununu Youth Services Center
<b>Audit Name</b>	Performance Audit
<b>Audit Period</b>	SFY 2016 -2020
<b>Status Report Date</b>	September 2, 2021

<b>Completion Status:</b>	
Unresolved	1
Partially	4
Substantially	3
Fully	2
<b>Total Action Items</b>	<b>10</b>

Summary of Audit Observations/Findings					
Number	Observation Title	Status [place X in status column]			
		Unresolved	Partially Resolved	Substantially Resolved	Fully Resolved
1	Reevaluate Criteria For Release From The SYSC	X			
2	Provide Evidence-based Treatment Programming		X		
3	Mental Health Assessment Should Be Evidence-based			X	
4	Define Individual Therapy and Family Counseling and the Requirements to Provide Them				X
5	Define Objectives and Develop a Strategic Plan			X	
6	Institute Comprehensive Performance Measurement			X	
7	Organizational Structure Should Be Reviewed		X		
8	Conduct a Formal Staffing Analysis and Develop a Written Staffing Plan		X		
9	Make Efforts to Minimize Staff Turnover		X		
10	Keep Parent and Youth Handbook Update-to-date				X

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**Observation 1: Reevaluate Criteria For Release From the SYSC**

Summary of Finding: We recommend the Legislature consider amending and harmonizing statutes regarding release of juveniles from the SYSC to eliminate contradiction; and allowing the JPB to consider factors such as participation in the SYSC Programming, progress towards treatment goals, a decreased likelihood that the juvenile will reoffend, and the best interests of the juvenile and the public.

Current Status: This observation is unresolved.

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**Observation 2: Provide Evidence-based Treatment Programming**

Summary of Finding: We recommend that SYSC continue with the review of clinical programming, ensure programming selected is evidence-based, review programming annually, and review the use of trained psychological associates and Youth Counselors to administer clinical treatment programs. With an annual review of programming in accordance with policy.

Current Status: This observation is partially resolved. SYSC management in collaboration with the SYSC Psychologist have researched various evidence-based treatment programs and the cost of the programs to support positive outcomes for youth. As we continue to progress through the legislative process on the future state of SYSC and the budgetary needs, SYSC has completed the research to support EBP for the youth at SYSC.

The following information details the various CORE Group changes. These listed programs will meet the needs of the youth both committed and detained under the current legislative status.

- Mindfulness-Based Substance Abuse Treatment for Adolescents: A 12 Session Curriculum. This program is an evidence-based program for substance abuse treatment with adolescents.
- ARISE Life Skills Program. The ARISE life skills program is evidence-based and designed to help youth deal with the events and challenges of everyday life. After participating in the ARISE life skills groups youth acquire a new sense of well-being, they are engaged in learning and motivated to make positive changes in their lives.
- ARISE Anger Management Program: Evidence-based program helps teens and young adults learn behavioral skills that alert them to: the physical signs that indicate anger is rising, the emotional signs their anger level is going up, and the stressors that trigger anger.

In addition the SYSC Psychologist has actively reviewed and researched evidence-based Trauma-Informed clinical and milieu programming to train both clinicians and direct care staff. One such program that was developed for use in juvenile detention is Trauma Affect Regulation: Guide for Education and Therapy (TARGET). TARGET was developed by Julian Ford, PhD, out of the University of Connecticut and is a trauma informed approach that has been successfully implemented into various juvenile detention centers. Research has demonstrated reduced recidivism rates for detained youth receiving the intervention for even just two weeks.

Further exploration on the financial and programmatic feasibility of implementing the above is necessary in light of the financial and program changes identified in the SFY22/23 budget. Meetings are continuing to address the ever-changing dynamics of the intended population served to provide reliable data for the

selection process of new EBP's. The SYSC clinical staff have taken over full implementation of all core groups with Youth Counselor participation and support. This insures validity and sustainability of the current group efforts.

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#### Observation 3: Mental Health Assessment Should Be Evidenced-based

Summary of Finding: We recommend SYSC replace the *Mental Health Assessment* form with an assessment that is evidence-based and supported by research establishing its reliability and validity for use in a juvenile corrections setting.

Current Status: This observation is substantially resolved. SYSC has determined to move forward with the MAYSI-2 as the selected mental health assessment tool. The MAYSI-2 is a brief behavioral health screening tool designed especially for juvenile justice programs and facilities. It will identify 12 through 17 year old who may have important, pressing behavioral health/mental health needs. Its primary use is in juvenile probation, diversion programs and intake in juvenile detention and corrections. Because it is relatively inexpensive, SYSC can implement the tool without any additional appropriations. Finalization is pending review and approval of IT security and contracting.

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#### Observation 4: Define Individual Therapy and Family Counseling and the Requirements To Provide Them

Summary of Finding: We recommend SYSC clarify the policy on individual therapy and family counseling by stating whether the policy establishes a requirement to provide a minimum number of services to committed juveniles; define services and contacts between juveniles, families, and clinical staff that satisfy the provision of individual therapy and family counseling; and define all services identified in the clinical notes.

Current Status: This observation is fully resolved. A workgroup was developed to review relevant policies and processes. SYSC policies for expectations of timeframes and minimum number of services provided to youth states the minimum requirements. SYSC Psychologist has developed definitions for clinical services for all clinical staff to understand and follow in relation to individual and family therapy. To pull the documentation together with the expected definitions, all fields within the computerized system have been updated and standardized to support consistency and tracking.

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#### Observation 5: Define Objectives and Develop a Strategic Plan

Summary of Finding: We recommend SYSC management engage in a strategic planning process to define the SYSC's objectives and to detail how those objectives will be achieved and measured. The Department of Health and Human Services and SYSC management may wish to work with stakeholders and the

Legislature to clarify the SYSC's mission and purpose in response to the changes to the SYSC population and release requirements.

Current Status: This observation is substantially resolved. DCYF has a process to develop division-wide strategic priorities on a biannual basis. These are developed in consideration of multiple factors, including importantly, implementation of the activities funded in the biannual budget. DCYF will specifically include strategic priorities for SYSC within this plan. Initial drafts of the SFY22/23 Strategic Priorities are complete following a two day strategic planning exercise in August. Completion is anticipated in September 2021.

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#### Observation 6: Institute Comprehensive Performance Measurement

Summary of Finding: We recommend once SYSC complete a comprehensive strategic plan that identifies goals and objectives, SYSC choose performance measures based on attainable data which can be used to determine the organization's achievement of its goals and objectives.

Current Status: This observation is substantially resolved. As referenced in the response to Observation 5, the biannual DCYF Strategic Priorities contain performance measures. As with the other strategic priorities, the SYSC components in the DCYF Strategic Priorities will have performance measures will be identified. Initial drafts of the SFY22/23 Strategic Priorities are complete following a two day strategic planning exercise in August. Completion is anticipated in September 2021.

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#### Observation 7: Organizational Structure Should Be Reviewed

Summary of Finding: We recommend SYSC Management conduct a formal organizational review of the SYSC structure and its span of control. If the review identifies needs, the SYSC should request the necessary resources and statutory changes from the Legislature.

Current Status: This observation is partially resolved. DCYF leadership, SYSC leadership, the DHHS Division of Program Quality and Integrity, and the DHHS Office of Human Resources to discuss the audit findings and plan this review.

In order to meet the appropriations SFY 22/23 budget, the number of positions at SYSC are being reduced through September and October, including the elimination of the Assistant House Manager Position, a significant reduction in education positions, in addition to other positions.

In addition, as part of their review and report on the replacement of SYSC, the staffing structure and span of control for the replacement facility is being considered.

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#### Observation 8: Conduct a Formal Staffing Analysis and Develop a Written Staffing Plan

Summary of Finding: We recommend SYSC conduct a staffing analysis; develop, document, and implement a staffing plan in accordance with PREA and its staffing policy and review on at least an annual basis.

Current Status: This observation is partially resolved. DCYF leadership, SYSC leadership, the DHHS Division of Program Quality and Integrity, and the DHHS Office of Human Resources to discuss the audit findings and plan this review.

In order to meet the appropriations SFY 22/23 budget, the number of positions at SYSC are being reduced through September and October, including the elimination of the Assistant House Manager Position, a significant reduction in education positions, in addition to other positions.

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#### Observation 9: Make Efforts to Minimize Staff Turnover

Summary of Finding: We recommend the SYSC administration as part of its strategic planning process, consider the need for a structured, strategic workforce plan, to include retention programs with quantifiable goals and objectives, determine the reasons staff leave the SYSC, and design tools to meet retention goals and objectives. The SYSC should consider and investigate the extent to which issues such as job satisfaction, staff perceptions of supervision, inadequate training, high stress and low morale contribute to the staff turn-over.

Current Status: This observation is partially resolved. The entire leadership team at SYSC has just completed the leadership training referenced in the audit report and has identified goals and objectives to support the transformation of juvenile justice and the treatment needs of youth served, as well as a mission statement. The Office of Human Resources is now identifying resources who will be responsible for creating a work plan to address findings 7, 8, and 9 in collaboration with the Division of Program Quality and Integrity and the SYSC. As referenced in the audit report, the SYSC has already begun efforts to improve staff morale, including a partnership with the EAP program and increasing utilization of the DCYF EPIC Peer Support Program. DCYF's clinical staff support specialist is now holding regular office hours at the facility to better support staff well-being, and planning has begun to engage the consultative support from an organizational psychologist.

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#### Observation 10: Keep Parent and Youth Handbook Update-to-date

Summary of Finding: We recommend SYSC management update the *Parent and Youth Handbook* to reflect current services and institute procedures to continuously keep it up-to-date.

Current Status: This observation is fully resolved. The Parent and Youth Handbook and the Youth Handbook have been completed.