



# NORCOR

## CORRECTIONS FACILITIES

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December 12, 2017

**To: Interested and participating parties of the NORCOR Facility, in particular, those interested in Juvenile care and custody:**

On December 5, 2017, Disability Rights Oregon (“DRO”) published a report concerning the NORCOR Juvenile Detention Center in The Dalles, Oregon. NORCOR feels responsible to respond to the negative allegations contained in the report.

While NORCOR acknowledges that there are areas requiring improvement, it is important to note various aspects of the DRO report that NORCOR, after close scrutiny, has deemed exaggerated or inaccurate. Notably, contrary to the findings in the report:

Each youth receives an initial and regular screenings for self-harm behavior and are continually supervised pursuant to specific criteria to ensure their safety and the safety of others. Mental health professionals have access to screenings and are available at the request of each youth without exception.

Youth at NORCOR who are removed from group settings based on unsafe or disruptive behavior continue to have access to educational resources, mental health and medical staff and regular interaction with detention staff aimed at re-integration into group settings. Youth are checked on and engaged at regular intervals throughout each day to ensure safety. By any estimation, this does not constitute isolation or solitary confinement.

NORCOR Juvenile Detention actively encourages consistent family visitation for youth. Time is scheduled for family visitation four days per week. The length of visits are only limited when there is a waiting list. When family travels for visits, or youth are in programming for longer periods of time, longer visits, including contact visits, are arranged.

Programming and education are planned and made available on a daily basis. Youth in the facility receive a documented 5.5 hours of education daily, including education outside traditional classroom curriculum, such as P.E. and the use of NORCOR’s state of the art greenhouse.

The broader community is also a critical part of NORCOR’s juvenile detention programming. Youth have access to yoga, drug and alcohol education, church activities, gender-specific groups and a greenhouse program that serves the youth and the community. Staff are trained in facilitating group interaction and often create impromptu opportunities for youth to learn such as art and journaling projects.

While acknowledging that there are possibly areas in need of improvement, characterizing the facility as inhumane is totally irresponsible. Steps are currently being made to improve areas in need. Illustratively, NORCOR has instituted several changes in a number of areas since DRO’s


first visit. Those changes include: (1) allowing additional personal items in rooms, including but not limited to, a journal and a pen; (2) elimination of the initial 24 hour lockdown and the "test" requirement before engaging in education and other programming; (3) the elimination of rules such as "do not look around" and "do not ask what time it is"; (4) no longer removing books from rooms as a consequence for behavior not related to the damage of the books; (5) increased social time and out of room time; and (6) not suspending visits, phone calls or education for disciplinary reasons unless safety concerns exist.

Changes that have been commenced, but have not yet been fully implemented include a behavior management plan that focuses on reinforcing positive behavior and a clear, concise grievance and appeal process. Activities such as visitation, education and treatment groups will not be included as restrictions for behavior management. Improved documentation of all daily activities, policies to allow for increased contact visits and treatment protocols for all youth are being incorporated.

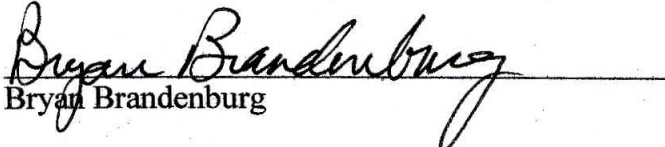
In spite of the negative claims made by DRO, NORCOR trusts that the public will realize its positive factors and continue to support NORCOR in its youth care and programs.

Dated this 14<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2017.

NORCOR BOARD CHAIR:

  
Rod Runyon

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