

Safety Concerns for Oregon Out Of State Facilities

Source: <http://www.acadiaexposed.com/report/>

On this day, April 11, 2019, Oregon has children placed in each of these facilities. Concern about lack of staffing and use of chemical restraint is not new.

Acadia staff members allegedly assaulted children and “would encourage kids to fight for their entertainment” according to a February 2018 local news investigation into Acadia’s Resource Residential youth facility in Indiana. The Indiana Department of Child Services placed a referral hold at the facility in April 2018, according to a local news report, meaning that they will not send any more kids to the facility.

Federal inspectors *last year discovered that 26 patient deaths went unreported* to the governing body of Acadia’s Rolling Hills Hospital in Oklahoma in 2016 alone. According to a lawsuit, reports of sexual assaults against young patients triggered government investigations “which resulted in the removal of all DHS [Oklahoma Department of Human Services] children” from the premises.

At Acadia Montana, state inspectors documented “*128 patient assaults*” that occurred during a 13 week review period in 2016. According to inspectors, “Staff reported the facility is understaffed” and one resident reported that staffers watch porn in front of the kids.

Arkansas regulators reportedly opened an investigation into Acadia’s Piney Ridge Treatment Center in 2016 after parents and former patients told local reporters the facility actually operates “more like a kid’s fighting ring”. A former facility staffer was arrested in April 2018 and charged with one felony count of engaging children in sexually explicit conduct. Former employees told a local news stations that Piney Ridge overlooked the misconduct and had attempted to “sweep it under the rug”.

Acadia facilities often treat children and teens, many of whom have been placed under Acadia’s care after incidents of abuse by their former caregivers. But we found

evidence of violence, abuse, and neglect at Acadia youth facilities driven by staffing problems, including previously mentioned episodes at Ascent Children's, Capstone Academy (Detroit Behavioral), Piney Ridge, and Resource Residential.

At Acadia Montana, state inspectors documented “*128 patient assaults* and 26 incidents of residents causing property damage occurring during this 13 week review period” in 2016. This followed a 2015 “statement of deficiency report citing the facility is not providing a safe environment” issued by the department after inspectors reported “*the facility has had 132 patient assaults*” during that 13 week review period.

The inspectors wrote “*the facility failed to implement significant changes in programming in order to ensure patient safety and reduce the number of serious incidents as indicated in the plan of correction*”. According to inspectors “*youth reported not feeling safe in the facility due to physical assaults by peers and lack of staff intervention*” and “*Staff reported the facility is understaffed*”. One resident reported that staff even **watch porn in front of the kids**.

We also found indications that overtaxed Acadia medical providers resort to using **chemical restraints**—i.e. deliberately overmedicating patients for the convenience of Acadia's staff. For example, a state inspection of Acadia's Options Behavioral “*determined that the on-call physician wrote orders for chemical restraints in conflict with the facility policy that restricted this practice*”. Federal inspectors also found that this facility “*failed to have adequate numbers of licensed registered nurses to provide nursing care*”.

While Oregon does not currently have children placed in these particular programs, these are all owned by Acadia—the same provider serving the little girl in Montana who was the subject of the OPB report.

A five-year-old boy was killed in June 2017 at Acadia’s Ascent Children’s, a chain of youth facilities in Arkansas. Staffers left the boy inside a hot van with a disabled safety alarm, resulting in felony manslaughter indictments of four former Acadia employees. This month, the facility abruptly announced it would permanently close all of its seven facilities. State officials had launched an additional investigation in December into incidents of alleged child maltreatment at the center.

Multiple instances of child abuse by staff at Acadia’s Capstone Academy in Michigan have been substantiated by state child welfare investigators. We obtained a December 2017 letter (see page 41) to the facility from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services which demands, in bold print, “*an explanation why previous corrective action plans have not obtained and maintained compliance for rules found in repeat noncompliance*”.

A teenage girl was violently raped by another resident at Acadia’s Valley Behavioral facility in Arkansas because of low staffing at the facility, according to a negligence suit filed in 2016 against Acadia. A 10 year old patient was raped in the presence of a van driver who has subsequently pleaded guilty to a felony, according to a lawsuit filed against Acadia and the van company that is reportedly headed to trial in late 2018.

