

BCJS Annual PREA Report: January 1, 2016 – December 31, 2016

Sexual abuse and sexual harassment of inmates by other inmates or by staff negatively impacts the mission of the Berks County Jail System to maintain a secure institutional environment that serves to provide protection and safety for the legally incarcerated of Berks County. In accordance with the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), the Berks County Jail System has established a zero tolerance policy for substantiated acts or threats of sexual abuse, sexual harassment, or retaliation for the reporting of sexual abuse or harassment.

By providing training, education, and reviewing our policy and procedures on a yearly basis we are confident that we are providing the inmates, staff, contractors, and volunteers everything we can so they are confident and comfortable with the PREA mandates. We are also confident that all of our staff, contractors, and volunteers have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the PREA mandates and the Berks County Jail System policies and procedures in order to effectively provide sexual abuse and harassment prevention, detection, and response to those allegations.

The Berks County Jail System had its first PREA Audit on June 27 and June 28, 2016. The final audit report noted 100% compliance with the PREA standards. At this time, changes are not necessary to the current policies of the Berks County Jail System. A change to the training provided to supervisors did become necessary to ensure that timely and consistent notifications are made to the PREA Coordinator and the jail's Senior Staff. This change was recommended and made as a result of a sexual abuse incident review.

Based upon a comparative analysis of PREA incidents for the years 2015 and 2016, the number of overall reported incidents increased slightly. In the year 2015, there were a total of 18 PREA incidents: 3 of which were substantiated, 6 of which were unsubstantiated, and 9 of which were unfounded. In the year 2016, there were a total of 22 PREA incidents: 2 of which were substantiated, 10 of which were unsubstantiated, and 10 of which were unfounded. In the year 2016, there were 14 incidents of reported Inmate-on-inmate sexual victimization, 2 of which were substantiated. Of the remaining incidents, 9 were unsubstantiated and 3 were unfounded. In the year 2016, there were 8 reported incidents of staff-on-inmate sexual victimization, 1 was unsubstantiated and the remaining 7 were unfounded.

Most reported incidents allegedly took place in a cell on a housing unit, without witnesses, physical evidence, or video evidence. Custody and supervisory staff responded to and intervened in each incident in accordance with policy. All but one incident was reported to the PREA Coordinator in accordance to established procedure. That one incident was appropriately resolved by supervisory staff, but not reported to the PREA Coordinator for several days. This delay prompted the change in training noted above. If medical, mental health or treatment services were needed, all protocols were followed as well. Three incidents were referred to the Pennsylvania State Police for follow up.

The Inmate Classification Committee conducted appropriate and timely reviews of each victim of or witness to reported sexual abuse, ensuring no inmates or third party reporting sexual harassment or sexual abuse experienced any adverse treatment or retaliation. The committee consists of a treatment supervisor, a representative from the medical/mental health department, and the PREA Coordinator. There were no claims by any inmates or third party that reported PREA-related incidents resulting in retaliation.

Based on the Auditor's Final Report and the 2016 Annual Review, there are no recommendations entering the year 2017. The Berks County Jail System is scheduled to have its next PREA Audit on March 13, 2017 and remains committed to a zero tolerance policy as described above.



Janine L. Quigley, CJM – Warden

2/2/17
Date