



WOODSIDE JUVENILE REHABILITATION CENTER

Department for Children and Families

January 15, 2020



Legislative Report

- Dated today, January 15
- Provided to this and other interested committees
- Recommends the closure of Woodside

Specific Committee Questions

- Who are the youth at Woodside?
- How do they get there?

Who are the youth at Woodside?

- Woodside serves only justice-involved youth through
 - *Delinquency System and in the custody of DCF*
 - *Interstate Compact on Juveniles*
 - *Department of Corrections (youth charged/convicted criminally as adults)*

Door 1: Delinquency System

- Youth are referred to Woodside in the juvenile delinquency system:
 - *By Courts, with recommendation from DCF that Woodside placement is necessary when*
 - no other suitable placement is available, and
 - the youth presents a risk of injury to himself or herself, to others or to property. See 33 V.S.A. §5291.
 - *BY DCF, applying the same standard as above*

Door 1: Delinquency System

- The number of youth in the delinquency system that could potentially be referred to Woodside has been declining

| Point in Time Data for Number of Youth in DCF Custody because of Delinquency | |
|--|-----|
| June 9, 2016 | 124 |
| May 31, 2017 | 107 |
| June 7, 2018 | 100 |
| August 7, 2018 | 94 |
| October 9, 2018 | 85 |
| December 4, 2018 | 84 |
| February 6, 2019 | 77 |
| April 1, 2019 | 78 |
| May 29, 2019 | 78 |
| August 1, 2019 | 76 |
| October 1, 2019 | 59 |

Door 2: Interstate Compact on Juveniles (ICJ)

- The ICJ requires states to safely care for youth who are on run from other jurisdictions outside of Vermont
- Sometimes, it is necessary to hold a youth “securely” pursuant to the ICJ until the youth can be safely returned to another jurisdiction
 - *The ICJ defines a “secure facility” as either staff-secured or locked in order to prohibit a youth from leaving*
- While the ICJ provides flexibility in what a “secure” program means, there may be times when DCF is required to hold a youth under the ICJ in a locked facility

Door 3: Department of Corrections

- DCF currently has an MOU with DOC to house and care for youth who are charged criminally as an adult or have been convicted as an adult for committing a criminal offense
- If Woodside closes, DOC would have the responsibility of caring for and holding youth in adult facilities who have been charged criminally, with sight and sound separation from adult inmates
 - *DCF and DOC may in the future identify alternative settings and enter into a new MOU*
 - *Please note that youth in the juvenile delinquency system generally may not be placed in adult facilities*

Other Considerations

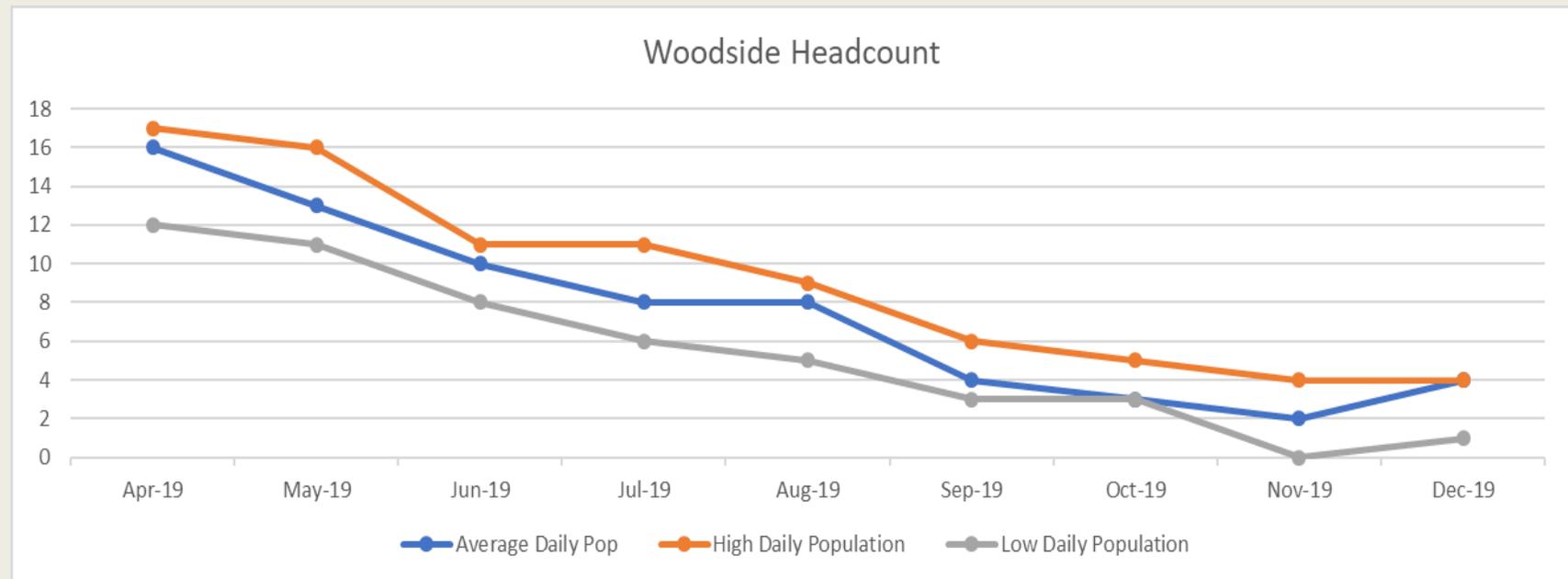
- Woodside has historically provided placement capacity for youth who have had escalating behaviors in other programs and who meet the standards for referrals to Woodside

Other Considerations

- Recent enhancements to the system of care for youth, including youth with significant behavioral and/or mental health issues:
 - *Expanding the capacity of the SEALL Depot Street program approximately a year ago from 12 to 18 beds. One of the beds is called Horizon and is a small apartment that can be staffed at a ratio of 2:1 or 1:1.*
 - *Establishing Washington County Mental Health capacity of two beds dedicated to support DCF's high acuity youth. One bed came on-line at the beginning of December 2019. The second bed is expected to be available in February 2020.*
 - *Establishing Vermont School for Girls enhanced residential treatment options, with the addition of four new acute level beds to serve young women. These four beds have been available since November 1, 2019.*

Other Considerations

- Since the last legislative report in April 2019, the Woodside census has been steadily declining
- Woodside had for the first time in its history a day with no residents on November 21



Next Steps

- DCF estimates that the current need for secure capacity for youth ranges from three to five beds total
- BUT, noting that there may not be a need every single day in the state for secure capacity

Next Steps

- In the short term, DCF issued a request for proposal (RFP) on January 9, 2020
 - <http://www.vermontbusinessregistry.com/BidPreview.aspx?BidID=41120>
 - *Responses to the RFP are due on February 28*
- As part of longer-term work, AHS has also issued an RFP for a consultant to analyze Vermont's residential system of care
 - <http://www.vermontbusinessregistry.com/BidPreview.aspx?BidID=40059>
 - *Responses are due January 17*
- In order to close Woodside, 33 VSA 5801, which directs DCF to operate Woodside needs to be repealed or amended

Acknowledgements

- DCF would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge Woodside staff who have dedicated their careers to caring for youth
 - *Their service has been greatly appreciated*
 - *DCF understands that the proposal to close Woodside is difficult for staff*
- At the same time, the State's need for placing youth in secure facilities is decreasing, which is a milestone worth celebrating

Questions and Thank You