

Memorandum

To: Senate Judiciary Committee
From: Christine Johnson, Family Services Deputy Commissioner
Re: Suite 12/Woodside
Date: March 27, 2020

On March 22nd, DCF Family Services Division was approached by the Department of Mental Health with a request to utilize the Woodside Juvenile Rehabilitation Center building to provide an emergency response to adult psychiatric patients who become COVID positive. Northwestern Counseling and Support Services responded to a request by the Agency of Human Services with space they had available through a lease with Northwestern Medical Center and offered it to DCF in a temporary capacity to fill the need to house the four youth who were currently at Woodside. On March 24th, the youth were moved to the new staff-secure program called Suite 12 in St. Albans.

Suite 12 is not a permanent solution. It is being stood up in a temporary capacity in response to the COVID emergency need to utilize Woodside for adult psychiatric patients. Because there were four youth at the Woodside facility which has a 30-bed capacity, the pressing need was to access the 30 beds to care for COVID positive adults with psychiatric needs.

The following items will help understand the Suite 12 program we are standing up in St. Albans:

- One shower is available for both staff and youth. We heard the sharing of the shower with youth is an issue for staff and have reserved a hotel room close to Suite 12 in St. Albans to provide staff a separate place for sleeping and showering. The hotel room will be available on-going. Staff are also able to use the shower at the program if desired.
- Fire Marshall - working on final details, the Fire Marshall has been engaged on this at the state-level and has given us the go-ahead. We are working on written confirmation.
- Food service - Northwestern Medical Center is providing meals 3 times a day. We are supplementing these meals with fruit, drinks, and snacks.
- Educational programming will start on Monday, March 30th - Kris Hoffman is leading the preparation and implementation efforts. Youth will attend school Monday - Friday.
- We're looking into installing delayed locks and alarms on windows through BGS.
- Fire alarms have been installed; fire extinguishers are also on site.
- If a client runs away from the facility, staff will use their Trauma-Informed Effective Response (TIER) training to de-escalate and support the youth. Staff are also able to draw on their Safe Crisis





Management training which can assist with de-escalation of the youth. If the youth is not de-escalated, staff are not to restrain the youth in the community; they will call the police to respond.

- Suite 12 has a start-up license for five beds effective March 24th. There have been four youth at Suite 12 since opening on March 24th; we have a 5th bed that is empty as of March 27th at 12PM.
- Youth have access to the Collins Perley Sports Center in St. Albans and will use the outdoor spaces there including an outdoor track, basketball court and trails. Youth will be supervised by staff at all times and will be allowed access to the community if they are deemed to be in a safe space at the time of the outing. Outdoor facilities including trails and fishing excursions were used by youth in a similar manner at Woodside.
- The overnight staffing pattern is three staff sleep; two are awake at all times.

