

NOTICE: THIS LETTER IS AN INTERNET VERSION FOR YOUR INFORMATION. IF YOU REQUIRE AN OFFICIAL SIGNED COPY OF THIS LETTER PLEASE CONTACT JANE MCELROY OR PAM DAVIS @ (850) 921-3048. EMAIL: jane.mcelroy@djj.state.fl.us or pam.davis@djj.state.fl.us

February 21, 2007

Dear County Representative:

This letter is in response to correspondence and questions raised by you over the last few months regarding the invoicing and dispute resolution process of the Detention Cost Sharing initiative. As the newly appointed Secretary of the Department of Juvenile Justice, I want to thank you for your patience in working with us. I understand we may not have been timely or responsive in addressing your concerns. I pledge to you we will correct this challenge.

My goal is to work in partnership with you and your associations to refine the Detention Cost Sharing initiative, to improve our data collection and to make the system an open process.

To kick off this initiative, we are scheduling two meetings the first part of March where we will provide:

- 1) information on our Juvenile Justice Information System and the recent improvements;
- 2) an accounting of the secure Detention budget along with an explanation of the expenditures;
- 3) a discussion on the reconciliation process; and
- 4) a question and answer period.

The meetings will be from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm to allow time for people commuting. The first meeting will be Thursday, March 1 in Tallahassee and the second meeting will be Friday, March 2 in Miami. Once we have secured meeting places, we will send out an announcement with details.

I have asked Jane McElroy, Director of Administrative Services to track all correspondence and phone calls from your office. Ms. McElroy will ensure we respond to you in a timely manner. Therefore, please direct all correspondence and phone calls to her. I have listed her address and other contact information at the bottom of this letter.

While we are still in the reconciliation process, I want to update you on the actions we have taken to date and to address your questions. For your convenience, attached is a list of frequently asked questions and responses that I believe will answer many of the issues and concerns that you have raised.

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We have taken the following steps to improve the validity of the data:

- **Duplicate Data:** In previous reports it was possible for a county to be billed more than once for a youth who was in more than one center on a single day. This type of duplication commonly occurs when a youth is transported from one detention facility to another. This has been corrected so that a county is only billed once, regardless of the number of detention centers a youth may have been admitted on a single day.
- **County – City Relationships:** Several counties noted that they were being billed for youth whose address indicated a city not located in their respective county. Steps have been taken to ensure that counties are only billed for their constituent cities, and these types of errors will continue to be corrected as they are brought to the Department's attention.
- **Out-of-State Youth:** In previous reports it was possible for a county to be billed for a youth whose county was correct, however the state field indicated something other than "Florida." These records are being individually verified by Data Integrity Officers to determine whether the youth was a resident of the county or another jurisdiction.

As we complete the reconciliation process, we will be sending you a final listing of the youth from your county that were in secure detention during the months of July 2005 through June 2006 (FY 2005-2006). We will include the amount you actually paid during FY 2005-2006 and the amount you owed based on the final report. The difference will be applied as a debit or credit on your next invoice.

In closing, I encourage you to join my staff at one of the meetings referenced above and let us begin the process of working together to address the problems and to improve the process. If you can attend one of the meetings, please contact Pam Davis at (850) 921-3048 or pam.davis@dji.state.fl.us.

Sincerely,

Walter A. McNeil
Secretary

WAM/JGM/Administration

c: Donna O'Neal, Chief of Staff
Sunny Phillips, Legislative Affairs Director
Ken Pifer, Assistant Secretary for Detention Services
Jane McElroy, Director of Administrative Services

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