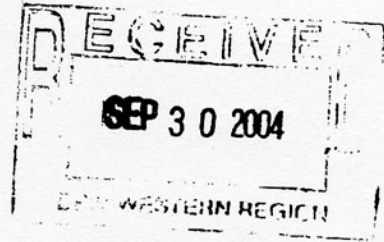




RICHARD T. KNOUFF, LSW, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
Working with children and families since 1967

September 27, 2004

Mr. McNeill  
Regional Program Representative  
Western Regional Office of  
Children, Youth and Families  
701 State Office Building  
300 Liberty Avenue  
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15222




Mr. McNeill,

Enclosed please find the plans of correction for Circle C Youth and Family Services from the investigation conducted last month regarding the Oasis Program. In addition to the response attached, we will no longer permit any of the programs to go on vacation with less than two (2) staff regardless of the number of residents.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this issue, please feel free to contact me at (412) 937-1605 x230.

Sincerely,

  
Richard T. Knouff, LSW, MSW  
Executive Director

cc. file

attachments

## Circle C Youth and Family Services Inc.

### PLAN OF ACTION FOR OASIS PROGRAM

September 2, 2004

During the past few months there have been numerous situations/incidents that have raised concern regarding the operation of the Oasis Program. Recently some of these issues have been brought to the attention of the Department of Public Welfare. As a result, and in an attempt to remedy the issues of concern, the administration of Circle C Youth and Family Services has created the following plan of action to address the issues noted and will closely monitor the performance of the program in those areas. The plan of action will provide an opportunity to improve the operation of the Oasis Program.

1. **Supervision of Residents** – Per agency policy and DPW regulations, staff need to know the whereabouts and activity of all residents in their care at all times. This requires periodic observation of all residents while at the group home or on an activity. Residents are never to be unsupervised by staff unless they are on a home visit, on community time or on a job search.
2. **Searches of Residents and the Group Home** – Per agency policy, staff are to conduct a pat-down search of all residents when they returning to the group home. In addition, any purse, bag or luggage are to be thoroughly searched. Searches should always occur in the presence of two staff. At least once a week, the entire group home and yard should be searched.
3. **Smoking** – Per agency policy and DPW regulations, there is to be NO smoking on agency property by residents or staff. Staff are not permitted to provide tobacco products to residents and residents are not permitted to have tobacco products in their possession.
4. **Phone use by Residents** – Resident use of the group home phone for personal calls should be limited. The program staff must determine an appropriate number of calls and time that residents are permitted to use the phone daily.
5. **Staff Vacancies** – The Oasis program has had three staff vacancies for a period of time. This has contributed to the inconsistencies in program operation. Over the next month or so, the goal of management is to fill the majority of the vacancies.
6. **Over use of Restrictions** – The management of the program needs to develop additional consequences to utilize for resident punishments. The over use of complete restriction from everything is not acceptable punishment for all infractions.
7. **Cell phone use by Residents** – As a general rule, residents are not permitted to have cell phones or use staff cell phones. Once a resident reaches level 4, has secured and maintained a job for at least 1 month, and has amassed \$300.00 in their savings account they are permitted to have a cell phone (cricket only). Resident's cell phones are to be turned into staff nightly, before going to bed.

8. **Computer/internet use by Residents** – It is imperative that residents are supervised by staff while online using the Internet. In attempt to tighten security in this area, the management will have a turn-off switch installed that will permit the program to secure and better control access to the Internet. Unless staff are helping a resident with a project, they are not to be spending time surfing the Web.
9. **Dress code (both Staff and Residents)** – It was brought to the attention of the administration that both residents and staff have been seen dressed in a provocative manner. The agency dress code policy is very clear and states that staff are not permitted to dress in a provocative manner for work. The program coordinator will review this policy with her staff and have all staff sign off on the policy. The residents should also not be dressing in a provocative manner and it is up to the program management to ensure appropriateness.
10. **Resident employment** – Since the majority of the residents at Oasis are of age to work, there needs to be a greater focus on employment. The primary counselors should be instructed to work with their residents on this issue.
11. **Immediately addressing issues in the Group Home** – It was noted by the inspector from DPW, when he was at the group home, that residents were returning to the group home and searches were not conducted upon their entry into the facility. This occurred while both the Coordinator and Therapist were standing within view of their return. It is imperative that the leadership of the program consistently enforces the policies of the agency. When either the Coordinator or Therapist witness any non-compliance with agency policies, they must intervene and enforce the policies.
12. **AA/NA meetings** – These meetings are for the therapeutic benefit of those residents that have D/A issues that have been identified in their treatment plan. They are not meant to be social hours for all residents. Therefore, only residents that have D/A issues identified in their treatment plan are permitted to attend AA or NA meetings.
13. **Appropriate boundaries** – As a result of the investigation conducted by DPW, it was apparent that there are major boundary issues at the Oasis program. These boundary issues are between staff and residents, management and staff, management and residents. It is very important that clear boundaries are maintained in order to ensure the most appropriate therapeutic environment.

In conclusion, both the Coordinator and Therapist will complete the program evaluation that was recently developed by the administration. They will also meet with the Director of Treatment and Director of Placement Services every two weeks to review the program's progress.