

REVIEW PANEL ON PRISON RAPE
March 13, 2008

Julie Stout, Superintendent
Rockville Correctional Facility

Testimony

My name is Julie Stout and I am the Superintendent of the Rockville Correctional Facility. Let me begin by thanking the Panel, and their staff for allowing me to participate in this process. It is my honor to appear before you, and to report out on the efforts being made at my facility regarding the elimination of sexual victimization at the Rockville Correctional Facility.

I have been employed by the Indiana Department of Correction for almost twenty-five years. In that time I have worked with minimum, medium and maximum-security offenders of both genders. I began my career in the field of corrections as a correctional officer. From there I held various positions, including counselor, release coordinator, administrative assistant, classification supervisor, and assistant superintendent of both the operations and programs side of the profession. I am a certified ACA Auditor, and have completed the testing and certification requirements from the American Correctional Association to become a Certified Corrections Executive.

Since the facility was surveyed last year, the mission of the Rockville Correctional Facility has changed somewhat. Instead of only being a 1,200 bed facility dedicated to supervising and serving medium-security adult female offenders, the facility now also houses the Department's Intake Unit for adult female offenders. This Unit receives offenders of all security classifications.

The Rockville Correctional Facility strives to provide a safe and secure environment for offenders, staff, volunteers and visitors. The passing of the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 provided additional re-enforcement to many of the practices and beliefs already in place at Rockville with regards to the safety and conduct of offenders, the behavior and business practices of staff, volunteers and visitors, and the integrity of the investigative process.

Following the enactment of PREA, Rockville Correctional Facility, followed new Department policy that called for the formation of a “Sexual Assault Prevention and reporting Committee.” The members of this Committee consist of me as the Superintendent, and both my Assistant Superintendent of Operations (who is the chairperson) and my Assistant Superintendent of Programs and Re-Entry. The Committee also includes the facility Custody Supervisor, Internal Affairs Officer, Unit Managers, Classification Supervisor, and a mental health treatment representative. The Committee meets at least monthly, and functions to actively review and discuss concerns regarding various offenders, to relay updates regarding PREA, and to examine the changes that can be made to enhance the safety of the offenders housed at the facility.

The facility has gone to great lengths to educate staff, visitors and offenders regarding sexual assault prevention. In the spring of 2007, posters and pamphlets were published by the Indiana Department of Correction. These posters emphasize sexual assault prevention, and the facility’s commitment to PREA. These posters were hung in each of the five housing units, the Offender Services Building, the Recreation Building, Dining Hall, Visiting Center, and Administration Building. Pamphlets were handed out to the offender population, including existing inmates, as well as all new offenders during orientation.

An announcement was posted in each housing unit regarding the Sexual Assault Prevention & Reporting Committee. This announcement discusses sexual assault prevention, intervention and self protection, the reporting of sexual abuse or assault, and treatment and counseling. Offenders continued to be educated upon arrival to the facility regarding sexual assault and reporting procedures. This information is also provided to offenders during meetings with their Casework Managers. Staff continued to receive training regarding sexual assault prevention during new employee orientation as well as annual in-service training. Volunteers also continued to receive training. Information regarding sexual assault prevention has also appeared on our SCOOP informational monitor for staff, offenders and visitors to view. The SCOOP stands for “Simple Communication on Ongoing Projects”, and uses a large flat-screen monitor that perpetually shows slides and colorful graphics that relay information on an array of important topics.

There are a variety of methods in place for offenders to report acts or threats of sexual violence. Offenders have constant access to staff, and may report

concerns at any time to any staff member. Reporting may be done verbally or through written correspondence. The facility has a TIPS Hotline, which allows offenders to report staff or offender misconduct directly to investigators using institutional telephones. “TIPS” is an acronym for Timely Information Promotes Safety. Offenders may utilize a dedicated telephone number at no charge to report misconduct, including crimes that take place both inside the facility and in the community. The calls go directly to the Internal Affairs Officer. All calls are logged and investigated by the Internal Affairs Officer. Most of the tips received through this process are similar to conditions of confinement grievances than allegations of staff or offender misconduct. Grievance-like complaints are assigned to another staff member for resolution.

In addition to facility staff, there are others that offenders can rely on to investigate their claims. Offenders may write to the Department’s Central Office with allegations of sexual victimization. They could also appeal any complaint of unsafe conditions to Central Office as part of a grievance appeal process. In addition to Central Office review, offenders may file a complaint with the DOC Ombudsman Bureau, which is a division within Indiana’s Department of Administration –not part of the IDOC – and is charged with the responsibility of investigating offender complaints, particularly those involving unsafe conditions. This neutral Bureau includes investigators that visit DOC facilities on a regular basis to investigate all varieties of offender complaints.

Offenders are screened upon arrival, and an assessment is conducted as to whether their history warrants them being flagged as a potential predator or victim. Offenders with documented reasons requiring separation are housed in separate housing units or transferred to another facility if they cannot be managed at the same facility. The facility utilizes an “in-house” program called Image Axis to log information regarding offenders. Information can be entered by staff and then reviewed prior to housing changes, reviews, etc. A sample of the Image Axis program has been provided for your review.

In February, 2007, the Indiana Department of Correction formed a committee named PROG or the “Prison Rape Oversight Group.” The committee consists of me as its chairperson, the Department’s Deputy Commissioner of Operations, the Department’s Northern Regional Director, three Superintendents representing various security levels, an Internal Affairs Officer, and the Department’s Director of Mental Health Services.

The committee meets quarterly, to examine best practices to reduce victimization, and to help communicate zero tolerance for sexual violence within Indiana's prisons. Among other projects, the PROG Committee helped plan a summit entitled "Addressing Sexual violence in Indiana Corrections: Prevention/Detection/Treatment/Adjudication". The summit, which took place April of 2007, covered such topics as investigating sexual violence, treating victims of sexual violence, and preventing sexual violence.

While the survey administered by the Bureau of Justice Statistics would indicate as high as 10.8 percent of the inmates at Rockville Correctional Facility experience some level of sexual victimization by other offenders, the facility's intel, and avenues of reporting discussed previously do not support such a high prevalence of sexual misconduct.

Having had the opportunity in my career to work with both male and female offenders, I have observed that the culture of a female facility is significantly different than that of a male facility. These differences are best described in a publication from the National Institute of Corrections *Gender-Responsive Strategies* written by Barbara Bloom, Ph.D., Barbara Owen, Ph.D. and Stephanie Covington, Ph.D. According to this publication, "Relationships also influence the ways in which women and men live and relate to others while in prison. There is a clear gender difference in the relationships women and men prisoners develop and maintain while incarcerated." This publication goes on to outline three distinct types of relationships that occur within female prisons, including relationships with children and family in the community, relationships with other women prisoners, and relationships with staff.

When examining how women behave in an institutional setting, it is important to gain a strong understanding of the relationships that exist within the facility. To help them adjust to life inside a female facility, Owens writes that one "generally will observe closer personal relationships between offenders" of a female facility, either in the form of "more intense emotional relationships or through pseudo- or "play family" arrangements. These relationships have at their base emotional, practical, and material connections as well as sexual and familial ties." I agree with Owen's analysis that women in prison form deep attachments to others that may or may not be sexual in nature. I am certainly not a researcher, but observation and experience have shown me that sometimes these families or relationships in prison have a tendency to take a turn for the worst and cease

to be a means of positive support, but rather take on more controlling and negative characteristics that make it more difficult for offenders to serve their sentences. When these relationships dissolve, sometimes one or more of the inmates involved will assume the role of the victim.

I should also point out that, in our efforts to improve the safety of the Rockville Correctional Facility, staff and I have received support from the highest level inside and outside the Department of Correction. In fact, in April of 2006, Indiana's Governor, Mitch Daniels, paid a visit to the facility, and participated in an offender graduation ceremony and staff physical fitness event, during which time he toured the facility and had the opportunity to speak with staff and offenders. We have also opened the facility to the scrutiny of other important visitors as well, including lawmakers, and members of our Community Advisory Board. This Board meets quarterly (the last meeting was December 4, 2008), and is composed of area lawmakers, members of the local judiciary, the County Sheriff, and local business leaders. During these quarterly meetings, these visitors are provided comprehensive tours of the facility compound, and are invited to ask questions and make suggestions on improvements to facility operations.

To summarize, the Rockville Correctional Facility has taken an active role in preventing sexual assault, and in educating staff and offenders regarding our standard of zero tolerance for sexual violence. As employees of the State of Indiana we represent the citizens of Indiana, and we carry out our responsibilities in a professional manner. My staff understands their duties, and continually makes every effort to protect the offender population from threats of sexual victimization.

It is my contention that the Rockville Correctional Facility offers a clean, safe and secure environment for Indiana's female offenders. To prove our commitment, my staff and I have volunteered to participate in the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission Standards Implementation Needs Assessment. The facility has been accredited twice through the American Correctional Association and has received positive comments from accreditation staff as well as other visitors. It is our constant goal to maintain a safe and secure environment for all concerned.

Again, thank you for inviting me to appear. I will now respond to any questions you may have.