

# Children in State Custody: Challenges and Opportunities

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Interim Joint Commission on Families and Children

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# Current State at UL Health-Peace Hospital

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- Peace Hospital assesses adolescents currently detained at a youth detention center or on diversion, often admitting those refused in other facilities.
- Peace Hospital has been a partner in solution finding discussions with KHA, Aetna Better Health, etc.
- Approximately 50% of our child and adolescent inpatients are in state custody.
- Today,
  - We have 57 children/adolescents in DCBS custody
  - On average the past couple months, we have ~53 inpatients/day
  - 30% of our children in DCBS custody require a 1:1 and/or single “blocked” rooms
  - 12 children/adolescents whose length of stay has been >90 days (up to 399 days)
  - Difficulty placing these children exacerbates “institutionalized” behaviors

# Current Challenges

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## Safety

- **Environmental:**
  - Ability/funding to build safe physical infrastructure on/within existing property.
- **Staff:**
  - Reduction of worker injury and high rates of light duty employees
  - > 30 staff injuries/month, > 75% due to physical management/aggression
- **Patient:**
  - Compromising current population's safety by cohorting children and adolescents with specific behavioral and safety needs.
  - Multiple daily risk meetings to review events of sexual acting out, physical aggression, self-injurious behavior

## Staffing

- **Ratios:**
  - Requires 2-3 staff/ patient
- **Turnover/Retention:**
  - 46 full time mental health tech positions vacant
  - 35 full time RN positions vacant
  - Viewed as undesirable positions due to the nature of the roles; KHA workforce group
- **Competency**
  - Skill set needed to effectively manage behavior this population is an ongoing investment of time and resources
  - Training and staffing in a manner that reduces risk of injury to workers involved in the physical management of aggressive children/adolescent

# Future Challenges and Solutions

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- UL Health-Peace Hospital **IS** part of the solution
- The children of our Commonwealth **ARE** our priority
- KHA partnership with legislature
- Assessment of physical location and infrastructure appropriate to reduce risk and facilitate safety.
- Partnerships with detention facilities to leverage strengths of each agency