

February 22, 2016

Board of County Commissioners  
Okanogan County

RE: Outsourcing of Juvenile Detention Services

Dear Commissioners,

In my roles as both Okanogan Behavioral HealthCare CEO and Okanogan County Behavioral Health Coordinator, I have been following the recent discussions of outsourcing juvenile detention services to Martin Hall in Medical Lake. While I understand there are many important factors to consider when evaluating options, I feel it important to provide input from the behavioral health perspective and the negative impacts of moving services outside of Okanogan County.

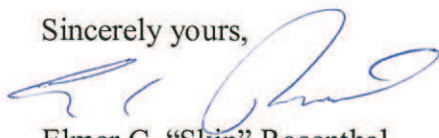
Currently, Okanogan Behavioral HealthCare (OBHC) provides both Mental Health and Substance Use services at, or in conjunction with, the community's Juvenile Program. Through a longstanding partnership, OBHC staff provide an array of services in the facility including crisis response, assessment, individual and group treatment, and care coordination. In addition, OBHC performs community outreach in coordination with juvenile justice staff.

Historically, youth served by the Juvenile Justice System are generally the most challenging and underserved segments of the population. From a therapeutic perspective, moving detention out of Okanogan County would be counterproductive. The ability to have access to this group and engage them in services presents a valuable opportunity that would be missed if they were placed away from the community.

Through several discussions with members of my clinical team, the consensus is that we would very much like to maintain the level of care we are currently able to provide to children placed in the Okanogan facility. We strongly feel that the plan to outsource detention services to a facility outside of the county would be clinically detrimental and represent a failure to accept responsibility to adequately serve the citizens of Okanogan County.

If there is any more information I can provide to assist you in making a decision, please feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely yours,



Elmer C. "Skip" Rosenthal  
CEO, Okanogan Behavioral HealthCare  
Okanogan County Behavioral Health Coordinator