



STATE OF WISCONSIN

Legislative Audit Bureau

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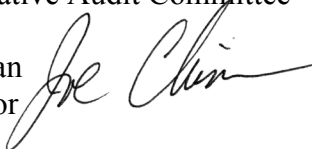
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Joe Chrisman  
State Auditor

DATE: March 21, 2013

TO: Senator Robert Cowles and  
Representative Samantha Kerkman, Co-chairpersons  
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

FROM: Joe Chrisman  
State Auditor 

SUBJECT: Proposed Audit of Supervised Release Program Placements—Background  
Information

At your request, we have gathered some background information the Joint Legislative Audit Committee may find useful in considering an audit of supervised release program placements.

Chapter 980, Wis. Stats., provides a process by which a circuit court can commit a sexually violent individual to the custody of the Department of Health Services (DHS) for control, care, and treatment until the court determines the individual is no longer sexually violent. In fiscal year (FY) 2011-12, approximately 360 individuals per month, on average, resided in the Sand Ridge Secure Treatment Facility, which is operated by DHS and initially houses all individuals who have been committed.

Individuals who have been committed for at least 12 months may petition the court to authorize a placement into the community through the supervised release program. The court may not authorize a supervised release placement unless it determines that five statutorily specified criteria have been met, including that the individual has made significant progress in treatment, treatment can be sustained during supervised release, and it is substantially probable the individual will not engage in an act of sexual violence while on supervised release. In FY 2011-12, 24 individuals per month, on average, were placed into the community through the supervised release program.

In the process of planning a placement through the supervised release program, statutes require the involvement of several parties, including the court, DHS, the individual's attorney, the district attorney, and local law enforcement agencies. Prior to placement, statutes require DHS to make a reasonable attempt to notify the victim or the victim's family about the intended placement. DHS must also notify the Department of Corrections, which must then make a reasonable attempt to notify the victim or the victim's family of the intended placement. Based on an incident in which a victim was not notified of the intent to place an individual approved for supervised release in a location near where the victim resides, questions have been raised about the overall program placement process.

While in community placements through the supervised release program, individuals remain in the custody and care of DHS, which is responsible for providing housing, treatment, and related support services to participants. Questions have been raised about the cost of supervised release program placements.

An audit of supervised release program placements could:

- evaluate the process used to place individuals into the community through the supervised release program, including notification of victims or their families;
- analyze the cost of supervised release program placements, including housing, treatment, and related support services in order to determine overall cost-effectiveness; and
- assess supervised release program outcomes.

I hope you find this information helpful. If you have any additional questions regarding this request, please contact me.

JC/DS/sm

cc: Senator Mary Lazich  
Senator Alberta Darling  
Senator Kathleen Vinehout  
Senator John Lehman

Representative Howard Marklein  
Representative John Nygren  
Representative Jon Richards  
Representative Melissa Sargent

Kitty Rhoades, Secretary  
Department of Health Services

Edward Wall, Secretary  
Department of Corrections