

ABOUT 10 PERCENT OF ADJUDICATED YOUTH REPORTED SEXUAL VICTIMIZATION IN JUVENILE FACILITIES IN 2012

WASHINGTON – An estimated 9.5 percent of adjudicated youth (1,720) in juvenile facilities reported experiencing one or more incidents of sexual victimization by another youth or facility staff in a survey mandated by the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), the Justice Department’s Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) announced today. Sexual victimization is defined as any unwanted sexual activity between youth and all sexual activity between youth and staff.

About 2.5 percent of youth (450) reported an incident involving another youth and 7.7 percent (1,390) reported an incident involving facility staff. About 3.5 percent of youth (630) reported having sex or sexual contact with staff as a result of force, and 4.7 percent of youth (850) reported sexual contact with staff without any force, threat or other explicit form of coercion.

The survey was conducted between February and September 2012 in 273 state-owned or -operated juvenile facilities and 53 locally or privately operated facilities that held adjudicated youth under state contract. The survey limited reporting by youth to incidents occurring in the last 12 months or since their admission to the facility, if less than 12 months.

Based on comparable state juvenile facilities surveyed in 2008–09 and 2012, the overall rate of sexual victimization dropped from 12.6 percent to 9.9 percent. The decline was linked to a drop in staff sexual misconduct with force (from 4.5 percent of youth in 2008–09 to 3.6 percent in 2012) and a drop in staff sexual misconduct without force (from 6.7 percent to 5.1 percent).

In 2012 thirteen facilities were identified as high-rate based on the lower bound of the 95 percent confidence interval of at least 35 percent higher than the average rate among facilities. Three facilities had victimization rates of 25 percent or more, and nine facilities had rates between 20 and 25 percent. Twenty-six facilities (17 percent) had no reported incidents of sexual victimization.

Four states (Georgia, Illinois, Ohio and South Carolina) had high rates based on the lower bound of the confidence interval of at least 35 percent higher than the national average. Each of these states had an overall sexual victimization rate that exceeded 15 percent. Three states (Delaware, Massachusetts and New York) and the District of Columbia had no reported incidents of sexual victimization.

Males (8.2 percent) were more likely than females (2.8 percent) to report sexual activity with facility staff, while females (5.4 percent) were more likely than males (2.2 percent) to report forced sexual activity with another youth. More than 90 percent of all youth who reported staff sexual misconduct said they had been victimized by female facility staff.

Overall, youth who identified their sexual orientation as gay, lesbian, bisexual or other reported significantly higher rates of sexual victimization by other youth (10.3 percent) than heterosexual

youth (1.5 percent). Youth who had experienced any prior sexual assault were more than seven times more likely to report a sexual victimization by another youth in the current facility (9.6 percent) compared to youth with no sexual assault history (1.3 percent).

Nearly 18 percent of youth sexually victimized by another youth reported being injured in the incident, compared to six percent of youth victimized by staff. Force or threat of force was reported in 68 percent of incidents between youth, and no force was reported in 63 percent of staff sexual misconduct incidents.

To better understand staff sexual misconduct, the survey included items related to the relationship between youth and staff prior to the sexual contact. Among victims of staff sexual misconduct, nearly two-thirds of the youth said that staff had told them about their personal life (69 percent), treated them as a favorite (64 percent) or gave them a special gift (62 percent). Nearly half (49 percent) said the staff member gave them pictures of themselves or wrote them letters, and nearly a third (30 percent) said the staff member contacted them in other ways when the staff member was not at the facility.

When youth were asked who initiated the sexual contact, 36 percent said that facility staff always made the first move, 17 percent reported that they had always made the first move and 46 percent said that sometimes the facility staff made the first move and sometimes they did.

The survey was completed by 8,707 youth randomly sampled from at least one facility in every state and the District of Columbia. The survey was administered using an audio computer-assisted self-interview instrument (ACASI) on touchscreen laptop computers in a private setting.

The report, *Sexual Victimization in Juvenile Facilities Reported by Youth, 2012* (NCJ 241708) was written by BJS statistician Allen J. Beck, Ph.D., and Westat, Inc., project staff David Cantor, Ph.D., John Hartge and Tim Smith. The report, related documents and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics' statistical publications and programs can be found on the BJS website at <http://www.bjs.gov/>.

#

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Acting Assistant Attorney General Mary Lou Leary, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice, and assist victims. OJP has six components: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking. More information about OJP can be found at <http://www.ojp.gov>.