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# MEMORANDUM

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Date: December 27, 2019

To: The Honorable Chairman and Members  
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator 

Re: **Sheriff's Department Responses to Youth Based Group Homes**

On November 18, 2019, I asked the Sheriff to review the number of occasions or frequency of when the Sheriff's Department, as a law enforcement official, was called to a group home where the clients are State agency referrals from either the Arizona Department of Economic Security (ADES) or the Arizona Department of Child Safety (ADCS).

The Sheriff's Department has provided the attached response through Chief Deputy Byron Gwaltney. The memorandum demonstrates the frequency and number of Sheriff law enforcement calls to specific group homes under their jurisdiction. Clearly, the law enforcement response to this type of facility is much more frequent than the general population.

Of significant concern is the increase in law enforcement responses to the Vision Quest facility located on River Road. Apparently, during 2018, the Sheriff received two calls for service. Through November 21, 2019, the calls at this facility for a one year period increased to 149.

I have asked our staff to develop an inventory of group homes in unincorporated Pima County to review permitting for zoning, building code and health issues. I have also asked our staff to review the licensing standards of these homes with the ADES and ADCS regarding referrals that relate to general care, rehabilitation and behavioral health.

We will also ask for the contracts for specific group home facilities, particularly those with high law enforcement call involvement to determine if there are any performance requirements in the contracts with providers relating specifically to security and safety of the client, including what monitoring is provided by the State. Our staff will determine if there is any requirement for the provider to notify the State when local law enforcement is called to a facility.

In summary, it appears in the cases where there is significantly higher number of law enforcement calls to a group home, facility control management may be an issue. In most

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cases, a criminal justice system response to a group home disturbance is not the most appropriate nor effective response to disciplinary issues arising within group homes.

CHH/anc

Attachment

c: The Honorable Mark Napier, Pima County Sheriff  
Byron Gwaltney, Chief Deputy, Pima County Sheriff's Office  
Jan Leshner, Chief Deputy County Administrator  
Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator for Public Works  
Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer,  
Health and Community Services



## PIMA COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Mark D. Napier, Sheriff

# M E M O R A N D U M

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Date: December 24, 2019  
To: Mr. C.H. Huckelberry, Pima County Administrator  
From: Chief Deputy Byron Gwaltney *BG*  
Subject: Sheriff's Department Responses to Youth Based Group Homes

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In response to your letter dated November 18, 2019, requesting a review of our responses to group homes involving State agency referrals our staff has compiled data that should be helpful.

Our Planning and Research Unit conducted thorough research on our responses to group home settings. What we found was considerable difficulty in gaining comprehensive data on youth group homes in particular. We contacted the Department of Child Safety (DCS), and the Department of Economic Security (DES). Adult and juvenile group homes must be licensed by one or both of the agencies. The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) licenses behavioral health and therapeutic treatment centers on both a long-term and short-term basis. DCS licenses all foster homes and other facilities used by DCS to provide temporary out-of-home care. In some cases, facilities can be licensed by both agencies to provide multiple services. ADHS was able to provide us with a list of licensed providers being available through the ADHS website. However, the locations of youth group homes and facilities licensed by DCS are protected from disclosure by State law and we were unable to compile a comprehensive list.

We were able to cross reference providers with key word searches within our Spillman system and located 17 youth-based group homes that are within our jurisdiction. This was complicated due to the fact that we do not specifically track group homes in our Spillman system. Our research found a much higher than average rate of responses to group homes as compared to typical addresses. Overall, the average response rate was approximately 30 responses per year, per location. The 17 group homes we identified were responsible for 2,534 calls for service from 2015- YTD 2019. This does not take into account the fact that there were no responses during six individual reporting years for some locations. This is presumably because these locations may not have yet existed, or their existence or operation may have terminated as some point during that time. This average has increased since 2015. It is important to note that it is highly likely we did not identify all of the youth based group homes in Pima County.

Of particular concern are the two Vision Quest facilities located on River Rd. Our research found that at the same location where the recent incident occurred our responses have dramatically increased this calendar year. The Sheriff's Department responded to this Vision Quest facility two times in all of 2018. The calls for service for this facility jumped to 149 responses for 2019 (January 1-November 21). Combined, both Vision Quest facilities on River Road were responsible for 859 law enforcement responses over the last five years. These responses are for a wide variety of issues including juveniles running away from the facilities, drug possession, criminal damage, assaults, and other disturbances. A complete breakdown of our responses to the known youth-based facilities is included below:

**ANNEX A** – *Addresses are not included in this memo for security purposes.*

Contracting Agency	Notes	District	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	LEGALNAME	CAPACITY IF KNOWN
DES/DHS		G3	20	19	37	59	60	ARIVACA BOYS RANCH	30
DES/DHS/DCS		R2	0	1	39	22	5	INTERMOUNTAIN CENTERS FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT	9
DES/DHS		F4	5	11	19	14	5	PASCUA YAQUI TRIBE YOEME KARI GROUP HOME	8
DES/DHS		R1	39	79	72	26	0	STARKS HOMES LLC	9
DCS		F2	14	19	23	7	16	GAP MINISTRIES	
DCS		F3	0	21	41	9	8	GAP MINISTRIES	
DCS		F3	92	48	8	13	19	GAP MINISTRIES	
DCS		F2	32	21	1	9	0	GAP MINISTRIES	
DCS		F3	18	72	29	7	3	GAP MINISTRIES	
DCS	in 2019, mostly 911 open and hang ups	F2	66	37	18	9	2	GAP MINISTRIES	
DCS		F1	41	41	10	3	4	GAP MINISTRIES	
DCS		F1	0	0	3	10	10	GAP MINISTRIES	
DCS		F2	16	26	11	10	17	GAP MINISTRIES	
DCS		F2	46	60	17	9	4	CASA D'AMORE	
DCS		R3	149	2	54	94	104	VisionQuest	
DCS		R3	25	38	97	195	101	VisionQuest	
DCS		TM2	13	44	33	30	23	VisionQuest	

There is clearly a change in the makeup of the Vision Quest facility where the recent incident occurred. This change could be a result of change in clientele, staff, policies, or any combination.

Many of the residents of these State licensed group homes are placed by DCS, DES, or by court order, however, this population could also be intermixed with non-government placed residents. Historically, when investigating calls for service at youth-based group homes, the facilities have

not disclosed who placed the juvenile. When required, a legal guardian at the homes will typically sign any referral forms needed.

We are planning on meeting with the management of the Vision Quest facility where the recent incident took place and working to determine the cause of the increase in calls for service. We hope to work cooperatively to find better solutions and involve any referring agency or guardian in the process. The meetings will take place after the completion of our criminal investigation to avoid conflicts.

Starting in January, 2020, we will be conducting training for all deputies on the legal issues surrounding all types of group homes. The training will also focus on problem solving and non-criminal justice solutions. Training will involve behavioral health, substance abuse, and incorrigible juvenile issues. When the criminal and administrative investigations are completed we will be better positioned to review our existing practices and determine what protocols could be put into place to improve outcomes. There is clearly a need to engage the appropriate agencies responsible for management of placed individuals in a more effective way.



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# MEMORANDUM

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Date: November 18, 2019

To: The Honorable Mark Napier  
Pima County Sheriff

From: C.H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CHH", is written over the printed name "C.H. Huckelberry".

Re: **Sheriff Deputy Incident at Group Home**

I understand the deputy involved in this incident has been placed on administrative leave while an Internal Affairs Investigation is underway with possible referral to the Pima County Attorney's Office for criminal charges.

Independent of these actions, I ask for your review of the number of occasions or frequency where Sheriff law enforcement officials are called to group home where clients or residents are State agency referrals with the Department of Economic Security or Department of Child Safety. It appears we should have knowledge of these group homes and the amount of times your office has been called for law enforcement purposes and if there are any protocols that should be established to involve the appropriate State agency who is the sponsor of a particular client who is the subject of the call.

Particularly for repeat calls, there should be appropriate protocols that would put the burden on the State referral agency regarding conduct of their client who requires intervention by law enforcement services.

I would appreciate your thoughts on this matter when convenient.

CHH/anc

c: Jan Leshar, Chief Deputy County Administrator