2013 Monitoring Visit to Graham Correctional Center

Graham Correctional Center (Graham) is located in Hillsboro, Illinois, about a four-hour drive south of Chicago, and an hour south of Springfield. Graham is a medium-security male facility. Graham also operates one of the three male Reception and Classification centers (R&Cs) within the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC).

**Vital Statistics:**
- Population: 1,632 - Rated Capacity: 1,074
- R&C Population: 383 - Rated Capacity: 100
- Total Operational Capacity: 2,110
- Average Age: 36
- Population aged 50 or older: 13%
- Cost per Inmate (FY 2012): $21,037
- Convicted in Cook County: 24%
- Convicting Offense: 5% Murder, 20% Class X, 22% Class 1, 27% Class 2, 13% Class 3, and 12% Class 4 felonies.
- Population by Race: 52% White, 43% Black, 5% Hispanic

*Source: IDOC, May 2013*

**Key Observations**

- Systemic crowding and staffing issues create problems at the facility.
- JHA found that conditions for inmates spending lengthy terms in reception at Graham needed improvement.
- Inmates temporarily housed in the gym at the time of JHA’s visit had many complaints.
- Graham’s sex offender treatment program remains peer-run due to lack of mental health staff.
- Once an educational powerhouse, Graham operated at the time of the visit with just two teachers.
- IDOC reportedly has taken steps to improve some noted issues in the time since the visit, which JHA will continue to monitor.
2013 Monitoring Visit to Graham Correctional Center

Executive Summary

During JHA’s visit to Graham, administrators stated that they “have nothing to hide” and that because they do things the right way on a regular basis they do not need to change things for visitors.1 Graham has several unique operational aspects in addition to the Reception and Classification center (R&C); the facility offers dialysis, sex offender treatment, and substance abuse treatment, all of which are uncommon at IDOC facilities.

However, cuts to programming at Graham were alarming, including the loss of the sole sex offender treatment staff person and dramatic reductions of educators. Such cuts were all the more unfortunate given that administrators expressed during the visit that they wanted these resources at the facility to aid inmates prepare for reentry. Most, 66%, of the inmates at Graham will be released in fewer than two years.

During the visit, JHA heard many positive comments from inmates assigned to Graham with the exception of numerous complaints from inmates who were housed in the gym or R&C and complaints related to programming cuts.

To be clear, JHA cannot confirm or deny the validity of particular inmates’ reports set forth herein.2 Inmate reports are not presented as fact, rather they reflect common attitudes or concerns that JHA believes should be acknowledged and addressed.3 IDOC is given the opportunity to review all JHA monitoring reports and respond prior to publication.

1 This report is based on a monitoring visit conducted on May 15, 2013 and ongoing communications with inmates, loved ones, and staff. Since the visit there have been leadership changes due to the warden’s retirement. IDOC officials and Graham administrators reviewed and fact-checked a draft of this report and it was last discussed with JHA on October 22, 2013. No factual substantive changes have been made since that time prior to publication. All statements of opinions and policy recommendations herein are JHA’s unless otherwise stated. See also JHA’s 2013 publication How JHA’s Prison Monitoring Works, available at www.thejha.org/method.
2 See JHA’s 2013 publication How JHA’s Prison Monitoring Works, “On a given prison visit, JHA interviews between 80-100 inmates. Our Prison Response Organizer also corresponds with more than 2,000 inmates and their loved ones every year through letters, phone calls, and emails. In these communications, JHA responds to requests for assistance, and we also record them in our database, which allows us to track particular issues by facility. Through these efforts, JHA is able to identify common issues and problems. … Research demonstrates this kind of information is vital to the operations of Illinois’ prison system, as attitudes shape the culture of correctional facilities and can have wider implications for security. Including these perspectives in our reports provides IDOC with an important opportunity to respond and educate inmates about its policies and procedures, while it also shows inmates and their loved ones that JHA uses what we learn from them in our advocacy.” Available at www.thejha.org/method. Inmates may send privileged mail to JHA, 375 E. Chicago Ave., Suite 529, Chicago, IL 60611.
3 A study found that “the lowest levels of tension and violence seem to exist in facilities where staff clearly follow policies, where there is meaningful communication between prisoners and staff, and where prisoners feel respected. All of these qualities flow from good leadership.” Confronting Confinement: A Report of the Commission on Safety and Abuse in America’s Prisons, p. 23, available at http://www.vera.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/Confronting_Confinement.pdf.
This report addresses the following: Reception and Classification, Gym Housing, Segregation, Grievances, Healthcare, Staffing, and Programming.

**Recommendations**

- JHA recommends that several R&C policies be reconsidered, including permitting inmates to make phone calls and have visitation after a certain length of time.

- JHA continues to recommend IDOC improve medical records, as well as data collection and sharing, to allow greater continuity of care between county and state correctional facilities and to promote the implementation of data-based correctional healthcare policies and planning.

- JHA continues to recommend that IDOC improve the grievance process, including providing a method for inmates to retain a copy of their grievance.

- JHA recommends that IDOC consider lessons learned in use of overflow gym housing to better prepare for any future use of the area if population is not held down.

- JHA recommended that Graham reeducate staff that inmate strip searches should be conducted in private.

- JHA recommended prioritizing filling educational positions at Graham.

- We recommend that Graham be provided with greater mental health staffing given the need for intake screening and sex offender treatment.

- JHA continues to recommend that Illinois research the cost and effectiveness of its sex offender management laws and expand resources for sex offender reentry housing.

**Reception and Classification**

An inmate’s time in IDOC Reception and Classification (R&C) can be one of the most difficult experiences during his incarceration. It is a period of uncertainty when the inmate is awaiting assignment to a parent facility and often is cut off from outside contacts. As the lack of available bedspace throughout IDOC causes inmates to spend longer terms in R&Cs, many policies that made sense for a shorter term become extremely problematic.

The rated capacity of Graham’s R&C is 100 inmates; as of July 2013, it housed 412. IDOC officials reported that the R&C’s operational capacity is 440. Inmates in R&C may be single-celled, double-celled or housed in four-man cells. Although R&Cs are generally designed to house inmates for about a week, and IDOC officials reported that Graham’s R&C is designed to house inmates for one month, JHA interviewed several inmates who had been held there over

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4 “Rated capacity,” also known as “design capacity,” is the capacity of the facility when it was constructed, in contrast with “operational/bedspace capacity,” which is the maximum number of inmates/beds the facility can hold.
100 days, with one reporting he had been there 210 days.\(^5\) Administrators reported that on average 250 inmates are processed through the R&C a month and the average length of time in R&C was 90 days. In reviewing the draft of this report, IDOC officials reported that increased privileges are planned for those housed for longer than a few weeks at Graham’s R&C, detailed at the end of this section.

Graham’s R&C receives anywhere from five to 25 inmates a day transferred into IDOC custody from county jails. These new inmates are celled upon coming in through the front gate at Graham and are then called out for various screenings.\(^6\) No determination of low literacy is made and inmates are not given any educational assessment during IDOC intake. Graham administrators estimated that about one percent of the population have limited English proficiency.\(^7\)

JHA continues to recommend that IDOC take more proactive measures at intake to identify inmates with low literacy and limited English proficiency.\(^8\) IDOC officials responded that identifying such issues is already IDOC practice, and that assistance is given to inmates identified as having needs through interpretation services, Spanish language forms, assistance at disciplinary and other hearings, and through English as a Second Language classes, where available, at parent institutions.

As inmates in reception are all treated as maximum-security as a precaution, the only place these inmates overlap with inmates assigned to Graham as their parent facility is in healthcare where intake inmates undergo various screening. IDOC officials stressed that R&C inmates and Graham inmates are not housed, recreated, or moved together at any time, as inmate lines are run separately in all cases, except for occasional emergencies. Administrators reported that the day the inmate enters R&C he will have a medical history interview with a nurse,\(^9\) which primarily relies on an inmate’s self-reports. JHA has noted the difficulties with self-reporting and recommended improvements to medical record transmission in prior reports.\(^10\)

Administrators reported that medical and mental health records are sent on the transfer bus with the inmate and that inmate reports regarding medications and medical treatments are verified

\(^5\) Some of the inmates who had been waiting particularly long times for assignment were trying to get into substance abuse treatment programs in IDOC. Inmates observed that Graham’s R&C population had many inmates serving time for Driving Under the Influence (DUI) convictions. JHA continues to recommend expansion of substance abuse treatment within IDOC. See e.g., JHA’s 2012 healthcare report, Recommendation 3, available at http://thejha.org/sites/default/files/Unasked%20Questions-Unintended%20Consequences.pdf.

\(^6\) This is unlike at Stateville’s R&C, the Northern Reception and Classification center (NRC), where more than 100 inmates a day go through multiple screenings assembly line style before being celled See JHA’s NRC reports, available at: http://thejha.org/nrc.

\(^7\) The facility has Spanish speaking staff and Spanish IDOC forms are available.


\(^9\) This nurse interview documents current illnesses, health problems, medications, special health requirements, substance abuse and intravenous needle history, sexual history, and history of sexual abuse or sexual predator behavior. The nurse also will note the inmate’s behavior, appearance, mental status, any deformity, evidence of trauma, and condition of skin including rashes, pediculosis (lice) infestation, jaundice, or track marks. Inmates are given a tuberculosis (TB) test or chest x-ray and asked if they have any communicable diseases such as Hepatitis/Jaundice, TB history, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and HIV.

\(^10\) See e.g. JHA’s NRC reports, available at: http://thejha.org/nrc.
with county jail and reported to the Graham physician. JHA received several complaints that inmates were taken off particular medications at intake. IDOC officials responded that such decisions are made solely for medical purposes by doctors and that inmates may not realize changing from a brand-name product to a generic is not equivalent to being “taken off a medication.” JHA will continue to monitor this area and encourages inmates to document issues.

JHA continues to recommend that IDOC improve medical records, as well as data collection and sharing, to allow greater continuity of care between county and state correctional facilities, and also importantly to promote the implementation of data-based correctional healthcare policies and planning.  

For HIV opt-out testing at Graham, peer educators speak with intake inmates in the healthcare unit during processing, and then the inmate is offered a confidential test as part of the nurse interview, at which point the inmate may sign consent or refusal. If not refused, the test is included in intake lab work. This lab work also includes liver enzymes, and if the enzymes are elevated, or if the inmate self-reports having Hepatitis C, he will be screened further. JHA has recommended IDOC implement routine opt-out testing for Hepatitis C at intake, as is now done with HIV, as prison presents a critical public health opportunity to provide diagnosis, disease management, education on prevention of transmission, and treatment. IDOC officials stated that mandatory testing at intake meets Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) standards and ensures greater safety for inmates and staff. 

For additional intake healthcare screenings at Graham R&C, administrators reported that the inmate will be seen by a mental health professional within 48 hours of intake, receive a complete physical examination with a physician assistant within seven working days, see a dentist for a complete dental examination with a full mouth dental panorex x-ray within ten working days, and will be interviewed by contractor Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities (TASC) to assess need for substance abuse treatment.

Administrators stated that an inmate’s suicide potential is also evaluated with the first 24 hours of intake. JHA has received reports of multiple suicide attempts over the past months at Graham’s R&C. As noted in other JHA reports, growing body of research demonstrates that long periods in isolated conditions, such as reception and segregation, can have a negative effect on

an individual’s mental and physical health. Inmates also reported that emergency call buttons in cells were not working. IDOC officials responded that this was highly unlikely because every call button is tested regularly. JHA recommends documented regular testing and advises inmates to report any particular issues so they can be corrected.

Currently at Graham R&C, intake inmates are not permitted phone calls or visits no matter how long they have been housed at the facility. Inmates are allowed only one 10-minute call the day they are transferred out of R&C. Inmates stated that they had not even been given phone lists to fill out to begin the approval process, which takes awhile. During the visit, administrators indicated they believed providing phone calls could be possible. JHA recommends that inmates be permitted to make phone calls and be permitted visitation after a certain length of time. Contact with the outside world through phone calls, visits, and mail are important for inmate wellbeing and adjustment, aiding in facility management and recidivism reduction.

Inmates reported that for communication with the outside world while at R&C they were given only one write-out, which is a pre-stamped envelope. Inmates may buy additional write-outs from commissary, which is available at best monthly. Several inmates reported that their mail was delayed more than a week. IDOC officials reported that Graham has been within two days of processing all incoming and outgoing mail since February 2013. Some inmates believed staff were purposely withholding mail. IDOC officials denied this allegation, which they state is unsubstantiated and often used by inmates to gain attention. Although JHA continues to receive complaints from inmates and loved ones regarding mail delays, outgoing privileged mail to our office appears timely, though we have no evidence relating to other types of mail. We will continue to monitor this issue.

Inmates with money to spend on commissary have access to limited items, primarily write-outs and hygiene products. IDOC officials noted that inmates are allowed to spend $15 a month and that a variance from department policy has been requested to increase the limit and allow additional items to be purchased. Some reception inmates stated they only had one jumpsuit to wear and expressed other cell cleanliness and hygiene concerns. IDOC officials responded that reception inmates receive laundry privileges and that cleaning materials are readily available and distributed to inmates to clean their cells.

Reception inmates also complained of, and JHA observed, stained mattresses and that many inmates lacked a pillow. IDOC officials stated that mattresses are monitored from issuance through turn in, and noted inmates are required to pay restitution for damage of items while in their possession. They reported where necessary and possible, mattress covers are replaced, and when a new cover does not solve the problem, the mattress is replaced. During the visit,

15 See e.g., JHA’s special report, A Price Illinois Cannot Afford: Tamms and the Costs of Long-Term Isolation, available at http://thejha.org/sites/default/files/TammsReport.pdf. While JHA notes that there are degrees of isolation, we consider it to encompass severely restricted time outside of a cell (minimum movement) and lack of programming (or restricted human contact).
16 At NRC all inmates other than those in segregation are allowed visitation after 60 days. See JHA’s 2012 NRC report, available at: http://thejha.org/nrc.
Administrators indicated pillows would be ordered for reception inmates lacking pillows. IDOC officials reported as of October 2013, the facility was still in the procurement process for pillows.

JHA received several complaints from R&C inmates about staff conduct. Many complained that they had very little accessibility to staff and that their counselor was not helpful. In one example, a JHA visitor observed that a counselor returned a grievance without a response just because it was written on a Spanish form, which was the only form available to the inmate. Other inmates stated they cannot get grievance forms. IDOC officials replied that this is untrue, as is evidenced by grievances processed for this population, and stated that inmates may request forms. IDOC officials also wished to note that JHA cannot confirm or deny the validity of particular inmates’ reports. While we are encouraged to hear that some Graham R&C inmates’ grievances have been processed, this does not prove that forms are and have been always readily accessible to all inmates. Inmates should be able to file a grievance on a blank piece of paper if necessary. JHA continues to recommend that IDOC improve the grievance process including providing a method for inmates to retain a copy of any submitted grievance. JHA will continue to monitor this issue.

Administrators stated that R&C inmates have yard three times a week for two hours each and may shower every other day. Yard time and showers are the only regular out-of-cell activities for most of these inmates. Inmates stated they were only getting two showers a week and some complained the showers are cold. IDOC officials reported that new water control boards have been purchased. Several inmates also complained that yard was frequently canceled and said on average they had it once per week. IDOC officials stated that yard occurs fewer than three days a week only for weather-related reasons and that cancellations are infrequent. IDOC officials also wished to again note that JHA cannot confirm or deny the validity of particular inmates’ reports. R&C inmates are not allowed any electronics and have no way to tell time. Due to this fact, JHA recommended that yard times be announced with at least a 10-minute warning. IDOC officials agreed and stated that Graham announces yard times with a 15-minute warning.

Although Graham opened in 1980 and the R&C X-house was constructed later, in 1997, administrators and JHA agreed that the most pressing physical plant need is for the temperature and ventilation issues in the R&C to be addressed. Despite this, temperature and ventilation issues continue to be a major issue. JHA and Graham staff had concerns that R&C would be too hot in the summer partly because security shutters cover cell windows and already at the time of the visit in May the area was noticeably stuffy. IDOC officials noted that inmates do have direct control of opening and closing their cell windows. Inmates expressed concerns about heat, stating that someone had died in the heat last summer. IDOC officials responded that this is a rumor and stated that there were no heat-related deaths or illnesses at Graham in 2012. Inmates also reported that the cells had only recently been improved so they could have fans. However, since inmates in intake do not receive state pay, some lack resources to buy fans. JHA recommends that R&C inmates be provided with state loan fans.

18 Although a few inmates in R&C had work assignments. IDOC officials reported that any inmate can be eligible for a work assignment based on good behavior and that workers are rotated for security reasons.
19 JHA has repeatedly recommended that IDOC carefully monitor temperature and ventilation control, and institute a strategic plan for improvements.
JHA received reports that inmates both in R&C and gym housing were strip searched in front of others. IDOC officials denied that this ever occurred. Inmates in R&C stated that they wait for the showers naked and must walk naked up the stairs. IDOC officials denied this occurred and stated that inmates are required to be dressed for all out-of-cell movement, including to and from showers. Absent exigent circumstances inmates should not be subjected to being naked in front of others and JHA recommended that Graham investigate such allegations and retrain staff so that this will not occur. IDOC officials stated that there is no need for retraining, as such alleged occurrences never happened, and wishes to note that JHA cannot confirm or deny the validity of particular inmates’ reports.

Many inmates in the R&C for long periods of time are low-security and requested to be treated more like general population than segregation, including being permitted phone calls, and some movement for religious services and visitation. Inmates stated they were bored and requested the facility provide some non-religious books and magazines. The physical plant configuration makes it possible that Graham could permit R&C dayrooms for inmates who have already been classified as lower-security risks and are just awaiting transfer to their parent facility. IDOC officials initially responded that security requirements make this impossible because they cannot mix minimum-security and maximum-security inmates. Nonetheless, JHA believed that dayrooms for specific lower-security populations spending extended stays in Graham’s R&C could be offered on an alternating schedule, or even on separate housing unit wings, so that populations would not improperly comingle.

IDOC officials responded in reviewing JHA’s draft report that Graham is preparing a proposal for a variance from department policy on reception status inmates. They reported that inmates exceeding 90 days in reception status will be moved to one wing, and a process for allowing for designation of the portion of one wing for initial intake is underway. Further IDOC officials reported that for inmates in R&C more than 90 days added dayroom, property, phone, shower privileges, etc. will be integral to this reorganization. However, they noted that additional out-of-cell time allowance will require additional staffing in the reception area. JHA is encouraged by this response and will continue to monitor conditions.

**Gym Housing**

When JHA visited Graham in May 2013, 100 inmates were being housed in the gym. Since the visit, these inmates have been moved out. At the time of the visit, administrators indicated that the plan was that implementation of Supplemental Sentencing Credit (SSC)\(^{20}\) would permit them to reduce crowding and empty the gym. However, implementation of SSC has been gradual.\(^{21}\) IDOC officials stated that 552 inmates were moved out of gyms across IDOC facilities in three

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\(^{20}\) See IDOC’s statement on SSC at [http://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/news/2013/Pages/NewAdministrativeRuleonSentenceCredit.aspx](http://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/news/2013/Pages/NewAdministrativeRuleonSentenceCredit.aspx).

\(^{21}\) As of July 2013, a total of approximately 1,137 inmates, and 19 inmates from Graham, had been released after SSC awards. Data on the SSC implementation is publicly available at [http://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/Offender/Pages/CommunityNotificationofInmateEarlyRelease.aspx](http://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/Offender/Pages/CommunityNotificationofInmateEarlyRelease.aspx). At the time of the visit, administrators indicated that with the levels of review between the facility and IDOC officials in Springfield the process was protracted.
months from May 1 through July 31, 2013, so that in total population in these gyms was reduced from 602 to 50, where they reported it remains.

Ultimately the Graham gym was emptied through a complex shuffling of inmates at IDOC facilities including transfers of higher-level security inmates from Graham to other medium-security facilities, Lawrence Correctional Center and Pinckneyville Correctional Center, while inmates from those facilities were transferred to Menard Correctional Center.22

Hopefully JHA’s recommendations regarding gym housing will be moot as Illinois takes steps to keep our prison population down. However, given that we have seen several instances of IDOC utilizing non-standard housing in the past year, we feel it is advisable to address concerns relating to these issues again herein.23 We believe there are lessons to be learned and several things that could easily be improved with some foresight and better communication.

Administrators reported that Graham inmates were chosen for gym housing based on being “model inmates,” who were low-escape risk and likely to qualify for transfer to a minimum-security facility.24 Administrators stated that they thought of the gym as a type of “Honor Dorm,” and some inmates had been asking to be housed there. However, they frankly acknowledged those inmates chosen for gym housing had no choice in the matter. Administrators also understood that many inmates cannot handle a dorm setting and feel safer with their own space.

As mentioned above, some inmates reported that when they were transferred to the gym they were strip searched in front of others. This kind of conduct is humiliating and also did not set up these inmates for a positive transition to the gym.25 Many inmates JHA interviewed in gym housing felt punished instead of privileged for their prior history of good behavior in IDOC.

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22 While inmates do not have a right to be housed at particular facilities, JHA has been disappointed to receive reports that several inmates transferred from Graham had been participating in programming at the time of the transfer and are now starting over at facilities where they may not have the same opportunities. Also although IDOC no longer formally makes the distinction, Lawrence and Pinckneyville are considered high-medium-security as opposed to Graham, which would be considered low-medium-security. Hence inmates complained that this was a non-lateral transfer that should only be made for disciplinary reasons and complained of being housed at new facilities with other inmates who they considered to be more serious criminals than themselves. JHA has also received several complaints from former-Lawrence and Pinckneyville inmates about resulting transfers to Menard, stating that they were transfer to the maximum-security, not medium-security, part of the facility and alleging that those transferred had pending litigation against IDOC, suggesting that these transfers were punitive. IDOC officials responded that they deny this unsubstantiated allegation and stated that transfers were not punitive. They also stated that some transfers were necessitated by changes in inmate behavior, which result in a reclassification of his security level.

23 See e.g. JHA’s 2012 NRC report and 2013 Vandalia report, available at [http://www.thejha.org/publications](http://www.thejha.org/publications). Since February 2013, non-standard housing has been used in the following IDOC correctional centers at some point in varying numbers: Centralia, Danville, Graham, Illinois River, Logan, NRC, Vandalia, and Vienna. At the height of utilization of nonstandard housing IDOC officials reported there were upwards of 602 inmates at a time in gym housing across multiple facilities. IDOC officials report as of October 4, 2013, this number was down to 50. JHA notes that the use of nonstandard housing at NRC was recently reported by staff to be commonly between 200-300 beds. See JHA’s 2013 Stateville report, available at [http://thejha.org/stateville](http://thejha.org/stateville).

24 Though such transfers if requested would be unlikely to be granted because of current population demands.

25 See e.g. Mays v. Springborn, 575 F.3d 643, 649-50 (7th Cir. 2009) (to determine if searches conducted publicly pass constitutional muster, a court will weigh the need for the search against the privacy interest).
Graham administrators had taken several measures to offer greater amenities for the inmates in gym housing including providing two televisions, two microwaves, adding a new hot water heater, and offering these inmates an extra yard period. Nonetheless, at the time of the visit, they acknowledged they were still working out a number of issues. Administrators noted a need for exhaust fan repair in the gym. They were also investigating how to open and fence the back of the gym so that there would be more ventilation.

JHA observed many powerful fans set up in the gym, although inmates with beds in the center of the area complained that with 100 men the airflow did not circulate throughout. JHA was pleased that at least the gym population beds were not bunk beds, as used in other IDOC dorm-housing settings, because this enables clearer lines of sight and greater airflow. Several JHA visitors felt that the gym was in fact cooler and less problematic in terms of ventilation than the R&C. Administrators indicated adding any more fans would require rewiring and an additional power source. Related to such electrical issues of housing inmates in a facility not designed for such a purpose, JHA was concerned by inmate reports about fire safety problems and that some overhead lights had “exploded.” IDOC officials denied this occurred and stated that there had been no incidents of exploding or otherwise spontaneously breaking lights. Inmates stated that prior to the visit there had also been a fire in the electrical room. IDOC officials replied that while no fire occurred, a breaker was tripped after being shorted-out due to an inmate placing a wet mop against the panel. Several inmates complained that there were no smoke detectors in the area and they felt unsafe. IDOC officials stated that per fire code, a constant fire watch was present, precluding the need for smoke detectors and providing a higher degree of alarm than such devices.

Inmates were adamant in informing JHA that they had not volunteered to be in the gym and that many did not want to be housed there. At the time of the visit the 90-day initial estimate for length of stay in gym housing was almost up and several inmates interviewed stated that they were told they could expect to serve their remaining time in the gym. Inmates reported that they were told by staff that there are only three ways to leave the gym: go home, die, or transfer. However, inmates reported that transfer requests were not being considered, so the only transfer option would be a disciplinary one. Inmates stated that if they refused housing in the gym they were sent to segregation and then after the segregation term sent back to the gym. IDOC officials noted that any inmate who refuses housing is placed in Temporary Confinement status and stated that final assignment depended on Adjustment Committee procedures, where some inmates did receive disciplinary transfers.

In being moved from cell housing to the gym, inmates were disrupted from the housing they were accustomed to and were then unable to use personal electronics, had less privacy, and were living in an area with other inmates with whom they might not be comfortable. The loss of personal electronics made it more difficult for inmates to pass time. Several inmates expressed concerns about idleness, heat, and tempers, noting that there had already been a fight resulting in

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26 Administrators reported general population inmates are only confined to their cells eight hours a day having open access to dayrooms and showers, with a one hour yard/recreation opportunity daily.
27 Inmates reported that there were outlets in the gym floor but they were covered so that they cannot be used; administrators explained this was because they were going to go over the circuit load in the gym, which would cause all the electricity to go out.
an inmate transfer. Many inmates were agitated that their belongings that they had purchased at commissary, including fans, were locked away unused without compensation. Inmates also complained that staff were using the gym equipment and weights removed from the gym. IDOC officials stated that that this practice was stopped within days and that although staff always had access to that gym equipment, separate equipment was recently purchased for staff use.

Many inmates complained about the heat during the May visit and were anxious about being housed in the gym in the summer. At the time of the visit, the inmates had ice water and iced tea available, and reported they received ice twice daily. Some inmates stated they did not understand how people could be asked to live in the gym when the prior year gym had been cancelled over the summer because the “walls were sweating” due to trapped heat and humidity. JHA recommended that staff take the time to explain that gym time was canceled due to the risks of inmates’ overexerting themselves during heatwaves to alleviate inmates’ fears. IDOC officials noted that the heat of the extended weather pattern in 2012 was abnormal. To the further irritation of the gym population, inmates stated that hot air was blown into the gym from an air conditioner in an attached security office. IDOC officials responded that it was not the case that hot air was blown in, as any radiant heat was dissipated by large fans in the gym. Lastly, a JHA visitor observed that the dryers also did not have an outside vent and would blow hot air into the gym bathroom area.

Inmates expressed concern about the roof of the gym being opened and worried exposed insulation contained asbestos. IDOC officials replied that the roof had not been opened and there has been no evidence of insulation or asbestos issues. Several inmates stated that the gym roof leaked when it rained and beds had to be rearranged. Inmates complained of bugs and spider bites, noting that there were no screens on vents. IDOC officials stated that there are screens on both the outside and inside of the vents. JHA visitors observed a large fly of some sort and cobwebs in high areas near the ceiling. Inmates complained that the facility had not been cleaned. IDOC officials responded that the facility is cleaned and materials are provided for assigned inmates to clean with daily. Further IDOC officials stated that while they recognize the need to improve facilities at all times, they wish to voice their strong objection to this pattern of untruths and other claims, which they state cannot be substantiated because they never happened.

Some inmates reported that they could get cleaning supplies four times a day to clean the bathrooms. However, inmates in the gym complained generally of the cleanliness of the bathrooms, the lack of soap for washing dishes, and had more limited access to facilities. For use in the gym there were four toilets and two urinals for 100 men. Standards call for one toilet for every eight men. JHA visitors observed that the gym bathrooms were functional but not very clean, had poor ventilation and odors, rusted shower handles, and there was water on the floor.

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29 However, as the urinals are located directly next to the toilets with no partition, inmates reported no one wanted to use them at the same time.
Inmates also reported that prior to the new hot water heater installation, they had had only cold showers in the four showers in the gym, though they were allowed to shower in the R&C X-house after 8 pm. Timely showers were an issue for inmates with work assignments, who were unable to shower after their shifts. IDOC officials noted that new water heater was installed and stressed that inmates were provided hot showers in other areas of Graham prior to the installation. Inmates stated that some of the showers in the gym did not work and complained about mold. IDOC officials denied the presence of mold and stated that maintenance and medical staff verified it was not mold, and stated that a thorough cleaning alleviated inmate concerns.

While administrators stated they had considered healthcare needs “somewhat” in selecting inmates for gym housing, JHA was concerned by multiple inmate reports, from inmates with various issues including asthma, diabetes, allergies, and mental health issues, that gym housing was aggravating their conditions due to heat, crowding, or ventilation issues. IDOC officials stated that these issues were considered and some inmates were excluded from the gym area. Inmates who had grieved their placement stated that healthcare staff responded that they had no control over the issue. An inmate receiving mental health treatment stated he was told by healthcare staff to just take more medications to “zone out” because he would not be moved. JHA believes that healthcare staff should be given the authority to move inmates from gym housing where such housing may be detrimental to the inmate’s health.

**Segregation**

At the time of the visit, Graham’s segregation unit held 46 inmates, out of a capacity of 60. Inmates in segregation are typically double-celled. Segregation inmates are permitted two showers weekly and two yard opportunities for two-and-a-half-hours each. If not otherwise restricted, segregation inmates are permitted non-contact two-hour visits on weekdays, and a monthly 15-minute phone call and commissary opportunity. Administrators reported that they track segregation use and that the average time in segregation was two weeks. However, for inmates with mental health issues the average time was a month. IDOC officials stated that discipline is never based on mental health status, only the severity of the infraction.

There were 10 inmates in segregation on psychotropic medication at the time of the visit. JHA received some complaints regarding inmates being put in segregation at Graham for conduct relating to their mental illness, including decompensation behavior resulting from medication changes. JHA recommends segregation not be used to punish inmates experiencing serious mental illness\(^{31}\) and recommends mental health staff have input on decisions of the Adjustment Committee, which is the disciplinary committee that investigates and determines rules violations by inmates that may result in segregation placement.\(^{32}\) IDOC officials responded that there is regular communication between the Adjustment Committee and mental health staff and that


\(^{32}\) See ABA Criminal Justice Standards on Treatment of Prisoners, Standard 23-4.3, “Disciplinary Sanctions,” which provides that “[s]anctions should be reasonable in light of the offense and the prisoner’s circumstances, including disciplinary history and any mental illness or other cognitive impairment.” Available at [http://www.americanbar.org/publications/criminal_justice_section_archive/crimjust_standards_treatmentprisoners.html#23-4.3](http://www.americanbar.org/publications/criminal_justice_section_archive/crimjust_standards_treatmentprisoners.html#23-4.3).
discipline proceedings for inmates who have diagnoses listed in the IDOC mental health guidelines include input from the mental health professional who provided caseload or treatment services to that inmate.

JHA also noted positive developments in interviewing a few inmates held in Graham’s segregation unit. One inmate JHA interviewed was newly classified as being transgendered as a result of new IDOC policies, and was single-celled, which is based in best practice as it provides more security for vulnerable populations. JHA also interviewed inmates who had been sent to Graham segregation from Vandalia Correctional Center’s gym housing where they were awaiting transfer to IDOC boot camp. JHA was pleased that these inmates were reportedly being given a chance to earn their way back onto the boot camp waitlist, as we have received many complaints from inmates who have been disciplined and kicked out while waiting long periods in crowded conditions to be placed in a boot camp program.

JHA visitors observed cellfronts in Graham’s segregation unit were particularly difficult to see through, which was a concern given that inmates need to be easily monitored. IDOC officials responded that the observation windows are uniform in size and allow security staff observation rounds and counts within the segregation unit. Inmates with obstructed cellfronts often complain about poor ventilation and extreme temperatures, and inmates in such segregation cells at Graham stated they were not permitted fans. IDOC officials responded that ventilation issues within cells are caused by inmates covering ventilation or return air vents, and that segregation inmates are not permitted fans as many inmates tampered with and damaged electrical circuits in segregation cells, causing danger to health and security. IDOC officials stated that because of this damage, alternating current outlets were removed from cells, and large fans are now utilized to increase airflow on wings.

In Graham’s segregation area a cage-like cell in the center of the unit, in the path of everyone coming in or out of the unit wings, is used for inmates on crisis watch. Though the inmate is easily monitored, administrators and mental health staff stated that they did not believe this was a good location and that being so exposed was likely to further agitate inmates already in crisis. JHA fully supports reconfiguring this area. During the visit, the crisis cell was in use by an inmate who appeared very ill and JHA was told he would be transferred to Dixon Correctional Center’s mental health housing.

Grievances

Administrators reported that in the prior year 1,749 inmate grievances were recorded at Graham. Grievances were trending up in 2013, likely related to the gym housing. For April 2013, administrators reported the highest grievance categories were Conditions, followed by Discipline, Medical,33 and Sentencing Credits. This comports with complaints received by JHA.

33 Healthcare complaints are addressed in the section below.
Again, while JHA cannot confirm or deny the truth of any particular inmate complaints set out herein, we believe the examples are representative of attitudes at the facility and issues that can be better addressed.\textsuperscript{34} JHA again advocates for IDOC to improve the grievance procedure.\textsuperscript{35}

As at every IDOC facility JHA has visited, we received multiple reports that grievance forms were not available, that the process was slow, and that inmates did not receive responses. Some inmates also had the impression that anyone who corresponded with JHA will be treated badly. IDOC officials emphatically denied this occurs and stated that in fact it was unlikely a majority of staff would even be aware of communication with JHA. We were particularly discouraged that some inmates did not feel comfortable reaching out to us on issues for fear of retaliation. IDOC officials stated while they respect that inmates may feel as they choose, they assert that such feelings would be unfounded. In contrast, several inmates believed JHA is a branch of IDOC—to be clear, JHA is an independent non-governmentally-funded non-profit watchdog group.\textsuperscript{36} Misconceptions about consequences for reporting concerns can create a dangerous and needlessly hostile environment with an absence of trust and respect for procedure.\textsuperscript{37}

JHA received some inmate complaints throughout the facility of physical plant issues, including cold showers and poor ventilation. Some inmates noted that they thought it was unfair that inmates on top bunks are ticketed if they put their fan on the bed, despite there being nowhere else to put the fan in a useable location for the top bunk. IDOC officials stated this is a safety issue and that IDOC has neither the funding nor time to make retrofitting a priority. Inmates commonly reported they did not have adequate cleaning supplies, although administrators reported that inmates are provided with Illinois Correctional Industries (ICI) cleaning products.\textsuperscript{38}

Several inmates reported that conditions are worse than in the past due to crowding and lack of funding resulting in: cuts to programming, less food, poorer quality clothing and bedding, and less frequent commissary. IDOC officials responded that commissary schedules have improved with a vacancy filled since the visit. However, IDOC officials also stated that there have been no programming cuts, no changes in food portions, and no lowering of quality in clothing or bedding. IDOC officials stated the amount of food inmates receive is not affected by funding and that dietary staff always follow the statewide menu and portion orders from the IDOC dietician and dietary management at each facility. IDOC officials also reported that in fact a higher-quality blue shirt is now used after a change in vendors. IDOC again wishes to note that JHA cannot confirm or deny the validity of particular inmates’ reports. JHA wishes to note that we have observed at facilities throughout IDOC cuts to programming, as well as clothing and bedding in extremely poor condition from use, and we commonly hear these same concerns from

\textsuperscript{34} An effective inmate grievance system is a fundamental element of a functional prison system, as it is an important source of intelligence, promotes accountability and trust between inmates and staff, and demonstrates respect for procedure and the rule of law. See e.g., Confronting Confinement: A Report of the Commission on Safety and Abuse in America’s Prisons, p. 92, available at http://www.vera.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/Confronting_Confinement.pdf.


\textsuperscript{36} For more information see our webpage generally and funders at http://thejha.org/funders.


\textsuperscript{38} For more information see http://www.icicatalog.illinois.gov/.
inmates. Furthermore, we believe it is obvious that there would be a correlation between the increase in inmates and use and some deterioration or scarcity of supplies and resources, as well as a need for greater resources.39

JHA again heard some complaints about the new phone company, Securus, that while the service is less expensive, calls are frequently cut off, and then the inmate cannot make another call. IDOC acknowledged that this was a problem and stated that the vendor has addressed these issues.

Inmates stated an inmate will always lose if he grieves staff conduct. IDOC officials pointed out this is an opinion and that all such grievances are investigated and addressed, case-by-case, but noted that inmates will not be informed of staff administrative or disciplinary results. JHA heard several complaints that correctional officers speak to inmates disrespectfully and are “aggressive.” Several complaints related to conduct that inmates interpreted as “sexual harassment” including staff falsely telling inmates another inmate was a child molester, taunting inmates for being gay, and instances of voyeurism.40 IDOC officials stated that they take seriously any charge made and thoroughly follow up. The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) mandates zero tolerance for sexual abuse and harassment in correctional facilities.41 Some inmates participating in the sex offender treatment program reported that they were treated poorly because of their status, for example being given less food. IDOC officials denied this occurred.

JHA heard an unusually high numbers of complaints about inmates not being allowed to talk at chow and even in dayroom. The manual states that “loud talking and boisterous conduct” is prohibited and administrators stated “quiet talk” at chow is permitted. JHA interviewed one inmate in segregation who stated he had been there 14 days for talking in chow hall. IDOC officials responded that all discipline is progressive and that such an isolated reason would not be the only cause of 14 days in segregation. Inmates also commonly reported that chow is rushed, at times lasting fewer than five minutes. IDOC officials stated that inmates are given ample time to consume food and reiterated that IDOC does not consider five minutes to be ample time.


40 The Prison Rape Elimination Act’s definition of “sexual harassment” includes “Repeated verbal comments or gestures of a sexual nature to an inmate … by a staff member … including demeaning references to gender, sexually suggestive or derogatory comments about body or clothing, or obscene language or gestures,” while “sexual abuse” includes instances of staff “voyeurism,” defined as “an invasion of privacy of an inmate … by staff for reasons unrelated to official duty, such as peering at an inmate who is using a toilet in his or her cell to perform bodily functions; requiring an inmate to expose his or her buttocks, genitals, or breasts; or taking images of all or part of an inmate’s naked body or an inmate performing bodily functions.” See PREA National Standards, 28 C.F.R. §115.6.

41 For further information about PREA see the National PREA Resource Center, available at, http://www.prearesourcecenter.org/, and the Prison Rape Elimination Act National Standards, 28 C.F.R. §115. See also, IDOC’s webpage: http://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/programs/pages/prisonrapeeliminationactof2003.aspx. Inmates may call the PREA report line, report by submitting a request slip, a grievance, telling a trusted staff member, or asking a family member or friend to call the report line, 217-558-4013. Inmates may also make PREA reports through JHA, where if an inmate states he wishes to remain anonymous, JHA will not pass on an inmate’s name to IDOC.
Many inmates had questions and complaints relating to the implementation of Supplemental Sentencing Credit (SSC). Several inmates took issue with the fact that the discretionary nature of SSC allows for consideration of the entirety of their criminal history, including past arrests and not just convictions, and some claimed they were being denied based on errors in their records. IDOC officials stated that errors in records are not likely to be sufficient to cause denial of SSC. IDOC officials further noted that they fully endorse the SSC laws, which allow the entirety of criminal history to be considered, and stated that only nonviolent offenders will qualify for SSC, and that even for those who do qualify because of being nonviolent, SSC is still is not automatic.

**Healthcare**

Healthcare staffing at Graham is a mix of state and contractor, Wexford Health Sources (Wexford), positions. IDOC officials noted that since the visit, Wexford has filled three positions.

At the time of the visit in May 2013, administrators reported that critical vacancies included the Director of Nursing (DON), a Psych Administrator, and Health Information Technician. The DON position is particularly important at Graham because of the dialysis unit and the facility’s need for oversight of continuity of care with intake through the R&C. IDOC officials reported that a new DON started October 1, 2013.

Although the healthcare staff reported that the infirmary averages about nine live-in inmates in a unit with capacity for 23, at the time of the visit that there were no terminally ill inmates housed at Graham. In the prior five years there had been 37 deaths at the facility, including one suicide. In the past year there had been 25 instances of suicide watch, where the average stay is 24 hours. IDOC officials noted that the average cycle through inmate mental health watch is 72 hours, which allows for inmates to be gradually observed at lower levels prior to release from observation.

At the time of the visit, 449 inmates were receiving psychiatric care at Graham with 220 on psychotropic medication, none involuntarily. Administrators reported that the average caseload for a mental health staff member was 127. There was a backlog of six to eight weeks for non-emergent mental health treatment with 350 inmates waiting to see a mental health professional and 146 waiting to see the psychiatrist. These backlogs were substantial.

Administrators stated they would like to have an additional mental health staff member dedicated to the R&C and one dedicated to sex offender treatment. Healthcare staff also reported they would like an increase of eight hours of psychiatrist coverage to have 32 hours weekly. JHA agrees that these staffing changes are advisable.

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42 State positions include 12 nurses, nine correctional medical technicians (CMTs), two dental assistants, 2.5 psychologists (for 96 hours, though Graham is authorized for three full time psychologists), and a social worker. Wexford positions include the doctor (full-time on call), 1.5 dentists (for 64 hours of coverage weekly), optometrist (eight hours of coverage weekly), psychiatrist (24 hours weekly), physician assistant, three nurses, x-ray technician, and pharmacy technician (16 hours a week).
Administrators reported a backlog of non-emergent eye care due to having only eight hours of weekly optometry coverage. The backlog for the dentist was less than one month at Graham.\footnote{Data provided from Graham administrators for May 2013.} This dental backlog is much better than observed at most IDOC facilities.

Although healthcare staff observed that they are seeing a sicker population and a lot of demand, unlike most IDOC facilities JHA has visited, Graham had all of its nursing positions filled and reported no supply problems.

Nonetheless, JHA received mixed inmate reports on the quality of healthcare at Graham. Some inmates complained that the healthcare staff treat them poorly and are “jaded” and “bitter.” However, the majority of the complaints about healthcare at Graham related to issues that are likely results of policies at the agency level including copays and decisions about medications and treatment. IDOC officials stated they remain committed to providing constitutionally adequate medical care and mental health care.

As at other facilities, JHA received a few complaints from inmates with disabilities who reported difficulty getting accommodations including getting a lower bunk permit and hearing aids. Administrators reported approximately one percent of the Graham population has been identified as having a disability.\footnote{The facility has three inmates who are assigned as attendants for inmates with disabilities.}

As at every IDOC facility, inmates commonly complained about the $5 healthcare copay, including that only one issue will be addressed per visit, that the fee is charged repeatedly for evaluation and then again for treatment, that intake inmates must go to healthcare to have their nails cut and are charged the $5 copay, and that it is unclear what is considered an “emergency” for which the copay will be waived. IDOC officials noted that there is no copay assessed for follow-ups. They also noted that nail clippers can be used as weapons and stated that there is also no copay assessed for nail-clipping. JHA encourages inmates to document any problems.

JHA interviewed one inmate who reported that he will not go to healthcare because he believes he cannot afford it and wants to save the little money he has to buy write-outs to communicate with his children. It may well be that this inmate would qualify for an indigent exception to the copay; however, due to uncertainty, he will likely continue to avoid treatment. IDOC officials stated that this inmate should make the effort, and it is his responsibility to make inquiries to determine his indigent status.
JHA continues to recommend abolishing the $5 copay for healthcare. In the shorter-term IDOC should at minimum provide inmates and staff with clearer guidance regarding copay assessments.

JHA received several complaints from inmates about inability to receive particular medications at Graham. Some inmates reported they were told they were being “weaned off” other medications that they had taken successfully, while others reported they were more quickly cut off. Some inmates reported that this combined with the wait time to see mental health staff was extremely difficult. JHA is concerned about such complaints and believes this is an area where outside oversight would be helpful to determine whether medication choices are consistent with both inmate wellbeing and cost containment.

### Staffing

At the time of the 2013 visit, Graham employed 408 staff, of whom 86 were female. The racial make-up of the staff was approximately 97 percent White, one percent Black, and two percent total Hispanic/Latino, Asian, and other. Nine correctional officers and one food service supervisor were on leave.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graham Staff</th>
<th>Authorized</th>
<th>Actual(^{48})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenant</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sergeant</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
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<td>286</td>
<td>284</td>
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<tr>
<td>Correctional Counselor</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical/Administrative</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
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Administrators reported non-healthcare critical vacancies including: a shift supervisor, sergeant, executive secretary, food service supervisor, supply supervisor, barber, account technician, office associate, chaplain, and a public service administrator. While authorized for three mailroom staff, Graham reported it had just two. Some inmates throughout the facility reported that mail was slow. Again, IDOC officials reported that mail had been on a two-day turnaround since February 2013.

Administrators reported that on average, eight security staff members are redirected to perform clerical/administrative support tasks including clinical, records, and business office. IDOC officials noted that no mandatory posts (as agreed to by the union) are uncovered and that if a mandatory post is not assigned to a single-shift employee, it is covered by overtime.

At the time of the visit, more than 11 positions at Graham, including the librarian, the chaplain, and several correctional counselor positions, were filled by correctional officers who were

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\(^{48}\) Data provided by administrators from May 2013.
temporarily assigned. Administrators were concerned that the union may enforce a rule mandating that temporary assignments cease after a set period of time and they would be left with even more critical vacancies, particularly counselors. Administrators reported that counselors had caseloads of about 200 inmates, plus they were having additional duties with SSC file review, which takes about an hour per inmate. JHA has repeatedly recommended that counselor caseloads be reviewed and that IDOC increase counselor staffing levels and training. As of the time of this report’s publication, IDOC officials reported that there were currently only three temporary assignments at Graham.

**Programming**

Administrators reported as of May 2013, for inmates assigned to Graham as their parent facility, about half of the population had assignments, with approximately 38 percent working, four percent in the substance abuse program, and eight percent in school. Illinois Correctional Industries (ICI) employed 25 inmates in a furniture making shop, with 55 inmates on the waitlist for this assignment. IDOC officials noted that the higher paying ICI jobs are more desirable and not everyone gets them.

Administrators agreed that inmates need productive outlets, stating that “idle time ruins a facility.” They noted that having a leisure time services supervisor position filled would improve their ability to provide recreational activities. Inmates expressed concern that prison is a holding place and not a place where a person can rehabilitate. Inmates requested more programming to aid in reentry success. For one example, one inmate requested parenting classes and other inmates noted that there are fewer chaplaincy services. IDOC officials responded that Graham does have the Fatherhood Initiative Program and that religious services have not been reduced, unless a volunteer quits or is sick, at which time a replacement is immediately sought. JHA commends Graham for efforts for certain special populations including offering monthly veterans meetings for the approximately 100 veterans at the facility and offering a special gym for inmates over 45 years old.

**Educational and Vocational**

Only inmates with more than a two year sentence must be tested at their parent facility using the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). Given substantial waitlists for educational programming within IDOC, inmates with less time would be unlikely to be able to participate. Inmates who test lower than a sixth grade equivalency on the TABE are subject to mandatory Adult Basic Education (ABE) participation.

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49 Administrators noted that even pulling up inmate information for review on slow departmental computers was remarkably time consuming.

50 About 33 percent were unassigned, 12 percent were in orientation, less than one percent was at the facility on a writ, and three percent were in segregation.

51 For more information see [http://www.icicatalog.illinois.gov/](http://www.icicatalog.illinois.gov/).

At the time of the visit, Graham employed only two teachers. When the facility first opened, there were 13 teachers with every classroom filled. Two teachers had retired in the year prior to the visit, and administrators were concerned that they could see additional retirements without any new educators being hired. Administrators wanted new staff to be trained by the experienced existing teachers before those teachers’ impending retirements. Graham is currently authorized for two additional teachers. Ideally, administrators reported they would like to have three additional teachers. IDOC officials reported that since the visit two teachers have been hired.

Graham was also authorized for a library associate but that position was vacant. As at many other IDOC facilities, inmates complained that law library materials were outdated, in this case materials were reportedly five years old. At the time of the visit, administrators stated they had interviewed for a new librarian and believed they would not have a problem finding teachers to fill vacant positions if IDOC would authorize/fund hiring them.

JHA recommends continually prioritizing filling educational positions, as well as utilizing volunteers to teach reading and critical thinking skills. Meaningful education and training courses reduce recidivism and make the best use of inmates’ time while incarcerated before they return to the community.53

At the time of the visit, Graham offered one ABE class with 15 mandatory ABE students enrolled. There were 178 inmates on the waitlist. In the prior year, 64 of 128 ABE students tested achieved a 6.0 on the TABE, meaning they had completed mandatory ABE requirements. Administrators indicated that inmates with TABE scores lower than 5.0 may request an inmate tutor through the education department.

JHA and Graham staff agreed that the lack of special education at the facility was disappointing, particularly given that one of the existing teachers is special education certified. Administrators also recognized that many of the inmates have developmental and behavioral issues and may have greater difficulty conforming their behavior.

Graham also offered three General Educational Development (GED) classes with 73 students enrolled and 12 inmates on the waitlist. Eighty-nine Graham inmates received their GEDs in the prior year. Staff stated there was an 84% pass rate for the GED test at the facility and expressed concerns about how changes to computerized GED testing may be difficult for IDOC to adapt to. IDOC officials noted that the addition of the two new teachers since the visit should improve matters.

For vocational courses, through Lake Land Community College, Graham offered Commercial Custodial Maintenance (15 students, 62 waitlisted), Construction Occupation (17 students, 79

waitlisted), Auto Body Technology (17 students, 50 waitlisted), Automotive Technology (17 students, 59 waitlisted), and Career Technology (15 students, 60 waitlisted).  

**Sex Offender Treatment**

About 20 percent of Graham’s population, 420 inmates, are classified as sex offenders. In Fiscal Year 2012, 16.2 percent of the IDOC population, or 7,839 inmates, were labeled as sex offenders. Sex offenders who receive treatment generally have lower rates of recidivism than those who do not, yet such programs remain scarce in IDOC. Some sex offenders commented, “People want help and they just need to offer it.” JHA again recommends that IDOC track the success of their sex offender treatment programs.

At Graham at the time of the visit, 50 inmates were in a sex offender treatment program, which had existed at the facility for more than eight years. To participate in the program inmates must admit guilt and responsibility, have a willingness to participate, have intellectual ability to participate, have had no major psychological problems that would interfere with their response to treatment, and have no aggression problems.

At the time of the visit, Graham sex offender treatment program had been without a staff member for three months. When the program began, it had three treatment staff. Due to shortages of mental health staff at the facility, the sole individual running the program in 2013 had to stop in order to provide mental health coverage to other parts of the facility.

Inmate participants were doing their best to continue some level of the program through peer-facilitated groups. Inmates reported that these groups were somewhat helpful and they were thankful for them. Nonetheless, inmates acknowledged that a staff member was necessary, noting they cannot hold their peers accountable for not participating. Even though the administration was supportive of the continuation of the program, inmates had difficulty even getting paper to use to make materials. JHA visitors noted the program’s bulletin board, which showed inmate donations to the Coalition Against Sexual Assault, victim empathy letters, and individual’s goals.

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54 To compare Graham’s educational and vocational participation and offerings with those at other IDOC facilities, see e.g. IDOC’s April 2013 Quarterly Report, at p. 6–7, Table 3, available at [http://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/reportsandstatistics/Documents/IDOC_Qterly%20Report_Apr%202013.pdf](http://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/reportsandstatistics/Documents/IDOC_Qterly%20Report_Apr%202013.pdf).

55 13 inmates at the facility were identified as predators.


58 See e.g. JHA’s 2013 Big Muddy report, available at [http://thejha.org/bigmuddy](http://thejha.org/bigmuddy) and Center for Sex Offender Management (CSOM), A Project of the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, “Twenty Strategies for Advancing Sex Offender Management in Your Jurisdiction.” (January 2009), p. 16, available at [http://www.csom.org/pubs/twenty_strategies.pdf](http://www.csom.org/pubs/twenty_strategies.pdf) (“Performance data (i.e., number of clients successfully completing and unsuccessfully terminating) as well as outcome data (e.g., recidivism following treatment) should be collected and analyzed by an objective party, where possible. If outcomes fall short of expectations, adjustments in program services should be made.”)
Many inmates were dismayed by the precarious position of the program. One reported it had taken him five years to get into the program and he had just started when the staff member was pulled. One asked, “What is more important - victims or money? The programs could save lives and prevent many heartaches.”

IDOC officials acknowledged this staffing issue. They stated they are attempting to add staff, including a supervisor in the mental health area. Although at the time of publication no new staff had been added, IDOC officials reiterated that the goal is to continue the sex offender treatment program as a true-to-form treatment program. They stated that the psychological education component remains in place, using peer educators and a psychologist monitoring the groups and seeing assigned inmates if they are on her caseload. Nonetheless they acknowledge that other facets of mental health treatment would be addressed by added staff. JHA will continue to monitor the status of this program.

At Graham there were 57 inmates approved for release who could not be released due to lack of approved placement, 44 of these were sex offenders. JHA continues to recommend that Illinois research the cost and effectiveness of its sex offender management laws and expand resources for sex offender reentry housing.

Substance Abuse Treatment

The substance abuse treatment program at Graham is a modified treatment community facilitated by contractor Community Education Centers (CEC). The program focuses on accountability and “right living” through adhering to the values that are the foundations of the community: “honesty (with yourself and others), discipline and consistency, responsible concern (for others as well as for yourself), and persistence.”

Administrators reported that there are 180 substance abuse treatment beds at Graham. At the time of the visit, there were 37 inmates waitlisted for the program. JHA was provided with information about inmates’ drugs of choice, which indicated alcohol and marijuana were the most common abused substances for the current program participants.

The program operates in three phases and takes nine months to complete. Inmates in the program can have school assignments but are not allowed to have job assignments. JHA appreciated that a GED study group was required for those inmates participating in the program without a high school diploma or GED.

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60 The Illinois Sex Offender Information website currently lists only one housing site, which is located in East St. Louis, with a capacity of 20 inmates, available at http://www.isp.state.il.us/sor/. There are over 2,700 registered sex offenders living in Chicago.
61 For more information see CEC’s webpage, available at http://www.ceintl.com/index.html. CEC also runs the program at Southwestern Illinois Correctional Center (SWICC), see JHA’s 2012 report on SWICC available at http://thejha.org/swicc.
62 Staff reported that the CEC contract requires caseloads for counselors to be 20:1, but the two housing units each hold 90 inmates, so 20 inmates are housed there as mentors or while getting ready to start the program and the official number of inmates in treatment was 160.
The treatment program uses motivational interviewing and behavior modification therapy. Staff reported that most inmates have the most difficulty in the four-week Phase 1 orientation period. They stated that it can be challenging for inmates to go from doing nothing to doing a lot each day and learning the rules of the program. Staff stated the biggest challenge is getting people to learn to get control of themselves and give up the “criminal code” to get into right mindset for treatment. However, they encourage inmates to “never close the door on change.” Inmates who successfully complete the program are typically able to be released directly from the program with TASC support for reentry.

JHA again recommends that IDOC track recidivism data for all such special programming to measure program efficiency and increase public support for funding efficient programs. Similar substance abuse treatment programs at Sheridan and Southwestern Illinois Correctional Center have demonstrated positive recidivism results.\(^{63}\)

In general inmates participating reported this was a good program. Inmates noted that success depends on an individual’s own mentality and desire to get something from the program. Other inmates observed that they were able to get into the program pretty quickly, but that inmates will also be moved out quickly if they do not participate as the program is strict. JHA was most concerned by a report that a hearing-impaired inmate had difficulty participating and had been requesting a communication plan for over six months without success. IDOC officials responded that hearing aids are provided to all who need them as part of communication plans and that these inmates are identified upon transfer in and monitored during their entire time at Graham.

JHA again also recommends that the Illinois prioritize funding substance abuse treatment within IDOC facilities, given the evidence that providing such treatment greatly reduces recidivism, crime rates, and the cost to taxpayers.

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\(^{63}\) See e.g. JHA monitoring reports on these substance abuse treatment facilities at [http://www.thejha.org/publications](http://www.thejha.org/publications).
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Since 1901, JHA has provided public oversight of Illinois’ juvenile and adult correctional facilities. Every year, JHA staff and trained volunteers inspect prisons, jails and detention centers throughout the state. Based on these inspections, JHA regularly issues reports that are instrumental in improving prison conditions.

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