



Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor

Illinois Department of Human Services

Caroi L. Adams, Ph.D., Secretary

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February 15, 2006

State of Illinois  
Commission on Government  
Forecasting and Accountability  
703 Stratton Office Building  
Springfield, IL 62706

Senate Co-Chair, Jeffrey Schoenberg  
House Co-Chair, Terry Parke

Re: Notice of Transfer Proposal for Sexually Violent Persons Program - Treatment and Detention Facility  
Location: 401 Woodruff Road Joliet, Illinois 60432

Pursuant to Public Act 93-0839, regarding the closure of a state facility, the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) is notifying the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability of the transfer of one of its facilities to a new site. IDHS is proposing the transfer of its Treatment and Detention Facility (TDF) operations in Joliet to a new site provided by the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) in Rushville, Illinois. This transfer meets the needs of providing a larger facility for housing the State's growing population of sex offenders who are being referred to the Department of Human Services - Division of Mental Health (IDHS-DMH). In addition, this transfer satisfies a previous agreement with Joliet, Illinois, officials that the existing facility would only be in their city on a temporary basis (see exhibit A). The decision for transfer from the Joliet site to a site in Rushville was recommended by Department of Human Services program staff and supported by an Interagency Task Force convened by Director Roger Walker of IDOC and myself.

#### Background

The current program site in Joliet provides housing and treatment for individuals referred to the Department of Human Services - Division of Mental Health (IDHS-DMH) under the Sexually Violent Persons Commitment Act, 725 ILCS 207. Under the Act, which became effective on January 1, 1998, the Illinois Department of Human Services must provide control, care and treatment until such time as the person referred is no longer a sexually violent person. The judge in the jurisdictional county where the case originated makes this determination. The program is unique and one of only 14 in the United States. It is neither a correctional program nor a mental health hospital, but rather, a secure, residential sex offender treatment program. These individuals are placed in Joliet under a civil commitment procedure and sex offender specific treatment is provided in a maximum security setting staffed by DMH security and management staff, and contracted treatment providers.

Eighteen individuals have been released since the program's inception in 1998. Initially the Sexually Violent Persons (SVP) program was housed at the Sheridan Correctional Facility in Sheridan, Illinois until it moved to the current Joliet site in 2000. Since 2000 the program has continued to grow in census from 125 residents to its present census of 250 residents. Planning for transfer to a new facility has been ongoing for over two years.

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Due to the rapid growth of this population, IDHS and IDOC are in agreement that the immediate relocation of the program to the empty facility in Rushville is in the best interest of the State. The opportunity to quickly establish a new site will allow for better programming and improved security.

### Community Responses

Both IDOC and DHS have moved forward with due diligence in both planning for the transfer and assessing community responses in both Joliet and Rushville. We have received strong legislative and community support in Rushville for the transfer. On September 15, 2005 a public hearing was held by State Senator John Sullivan and State Representative Rich Myers regarding the future of the Rushville Correctional Facility. Approximately 300 Rushville community residents attended the hearing. The local residents overwhelmingly indicated a wish to open the facility, as soon as possible, as a program for SVPs. In a follow-up facility walk through by 560 residents, hosted by IDOC, IDHS and Senator Sullivan, it was again made clear by positive responses from the residents that the Rushville community endorses the relocation and the potential economic development it would bring to their community. Mayor Shepherd of the Rushville community sent correspondence to IDHS on October 4, 2005 reinforcing his community's support of the re-location (see exhibit B).

The City of Joliet has also wholeheartedly endorsed the proposal and will work closely with IDHS to ensure that all staff preferring not to relocate are provided with employment assistance (see exhibit C). The City of Joliet Police Department and IDHS are already actively engaging the Will County Sheriff's Office in the referral of Security Therapy Aides who may wish to seek correctional officer positions with that entity. In addition, IDHS is working with the IDOC to identify available positions and it also is expected that job positions will be available in IDHS mental health facilities. In addition to the attached exhibits demonstrating the responses of both the Joliet and Rushville communities, we have also attached a fact sheet (exhibit D) which hopefully will help inform your Commission regarding this matter.

So that the needs of this specialized population may continue to be met, IDHS stands ready to implement its transfer plans immediately upon receiving the expedited approval of the Commission. Also, the department wishes to expedite the transfer as soon as possible and avoid increased budgetary expenditures that would be incurred if the move is not realized by July 1, 2006, FY07.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Carol L. Adams, Ph.D.

Secretary

cc: All Commission Members