

Recommendations for a State-Wide Policy on Restraint in Ohio

At the request of the Governor's office, seven state departments joined together to create a work group dedicated to researching issues related to the use of physical and chemical restraints within their systems. Those seven departments include the Ohio Departments of Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities, Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services, Youth Services, Education, Jobs and Family Services and Health. Those departments have agreed that the following recommendations be incorporated into a state-wide policy on the use of prone restraints in particular. It is also recommended that the group continue to collaborate toward a single state policy on the use of restraints and seclusion in general.

Position Statement

Ohio is committed to services that focus on assisting people to live meaningful lives that are free of coercion or violence of all kinds. Those services are to be provided by a caring and competent workforce in the safest and least intrusive or restrictive method possible. The safety of both staff and service recipients is of utmost concern. The use of physical restraint or seclusion is not viewed as a therapeutic intervention, but rather as the failure of treatment and is to be used only when there is imminent risk of serious harm to the individual or others. Such interventions may only be used by trained staff and under the approval, guidance and restrictions as outlined within each state department's policies.

The use of restraint and seclusion should be a last resort and the exception rather than the norm for daily service delivery. The focus for Ohio's service delivery systems should be on changing the culture of organizations toward a positive approach and eliminating the need for physical intervention.

Prone Restraint

It is recommended that Ohio prohibit the use of the **prone restraint**, (as defined in Attachment A), across all seven systems due to overwhelming evidence that this face-down position carries a high risk of serious injury or death. The use of **prone containment** (as defined in Attachment A) may be permitted by some of the state departments under the following conditions:

- An individual who resides or receives services in a secure facility (as defined in Attachment A)
- Applied only with prior authorization by a designated person(s) who is familiar with the individual's medical history and history of trauma or abuse
- Applied only by staff who have been trained on the safe use of this procedure including, how to recognize and respond to signs of distress in the individual
- Applied in a manner that ensures that no pressure is placed on the individual in a manner that could interfere with breathing
- Conforms to time restraints as outlined in policy

Training Components

It is recommended that each state department develop a policy that requires staff training in the following areas:

- The dangers of restraint and seclusion
- Alternatives to the use of restraint and seclusion
- Empathy-building training (models such as trauma-informed care, etc.)
- Identification of Unmet Needs (understanding aggressive behavior as communication of unmet needs)
- Prevention and de-escalation of aggression
- Safe crisis intervention techniques
- Debriefing (learning from the crisis)
- Creating a culture of positive supports

Reporting/Tracking

It is recommended that each state department create a process for tracking and reporting the use of physical restraint and seclusion in all service areas in order to more closely monitor the risks and measure progress toward creating a positive approach to service delivery.

Attachment A: Definitions

PRONE RESTRAINT: Prone Restraint is defined as all items or measures used to limit or control the movement or normal functioning of any portion or all of an individual's body while the individual is in a face-down positions. Prone restraint may include either physical/manual, or mechanical restraint.

PRONE CONTAINMENT: Prone Containment is defined as a brief physical/manual restraint of an individual face-down for the purpose of effectively gaining physical control of an individual in order to prevent harm to self and others, or for the purpose of transport.

SECURE FACILITY: Secure facility is defined as any site that is designed and operated to ensure that all of its entrances and exits are locked and under the exclusive control of its staff and to ensure that, because of that exclusive control, no person who is institutionalized or confined in the facility may leave the facility without permission or supervision.