

Massachusetts
Department
of Youth Services



**Cook County Juvenile
Detention Advisory
Board, Dec 16, 2020**



Back Drop

2006: The Massachusetts Department of Youth Services had:

- No policy regulating the use of isolation
- No data related to isolation
- No direction to the field related to practice standards
- Inadequate intake screening process
- Unlicensed clinical staff
- A salary structure that did not support recruitment & retention of qualified, experienced clinicians
- A lot of self-harm by youths in their rooms



DYS Policy: No Room Confinement as a Sanction

“It is the policy of the Department of Youth Services (“DYS”) that during non-sleep hours, youth may be kept involuntarily in a room for the following reasons: to calm a youth who is exhibiting seriously disruptive or dangerous behavior; ... for the safety and security of a youth; ... A youth may not be confined in a room for the following purposes: as a consequence for non-compliance; punishment; harassment; or in retaliation for any youth conduct... Room confinement may only be used when less restrictive interventions have failed and for the least amount of time required for the youth to regain self-control.”

Massachusetts Youth Services Juvenile Justice Legal Issues & Policies
Section: 03.03 Room Confinement



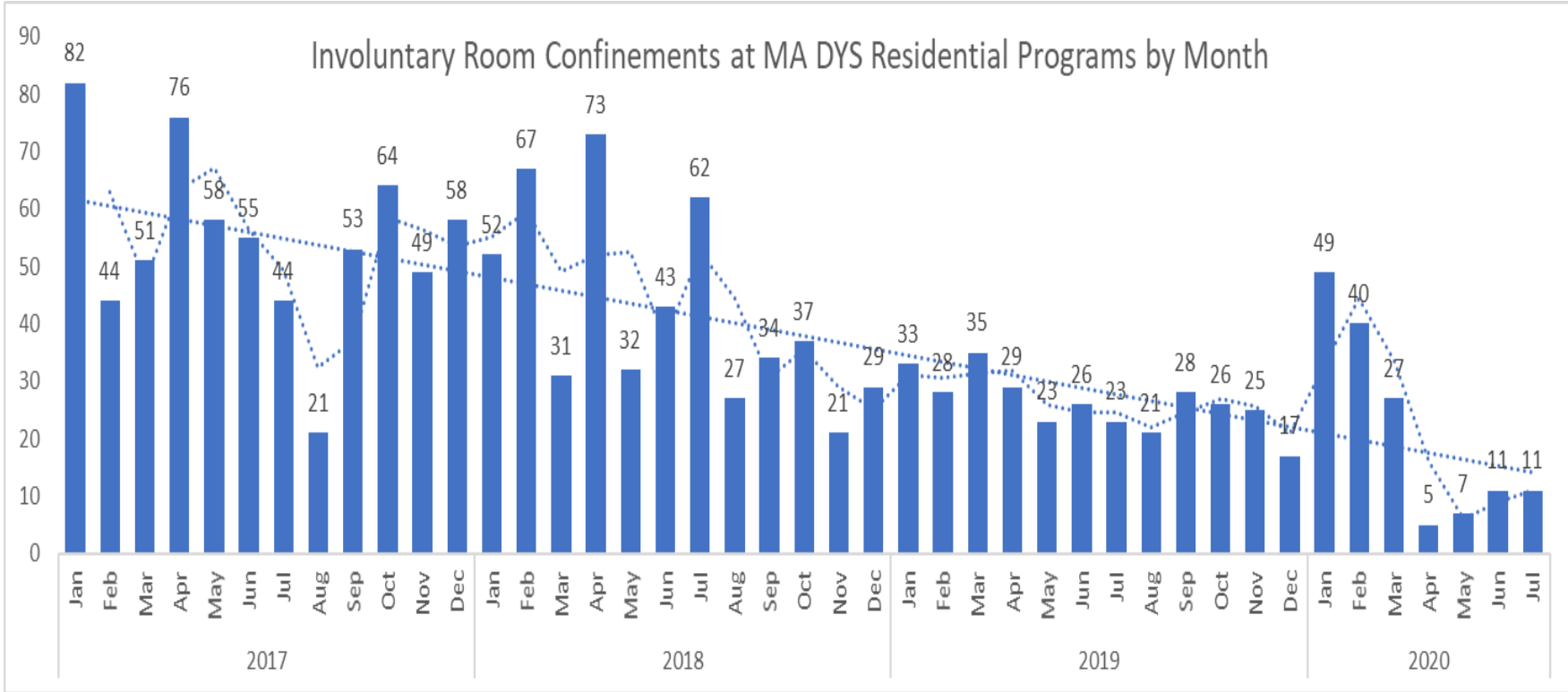
Strategic Approach

Adopted Strength Based Approach

- **Positive Youth Development:** positions youth as assets not problems to be fixed
- **Premium on staff engagement of youth:** respect – trust – potential for constructive criticism
- **Dialectical Behavioral Therapy:** Cognitive strategy
- **Created System of Repairs**
- **Moved Toward a Balanced Behavioral Approach that Includes Limit Setting as Well as Incentives**



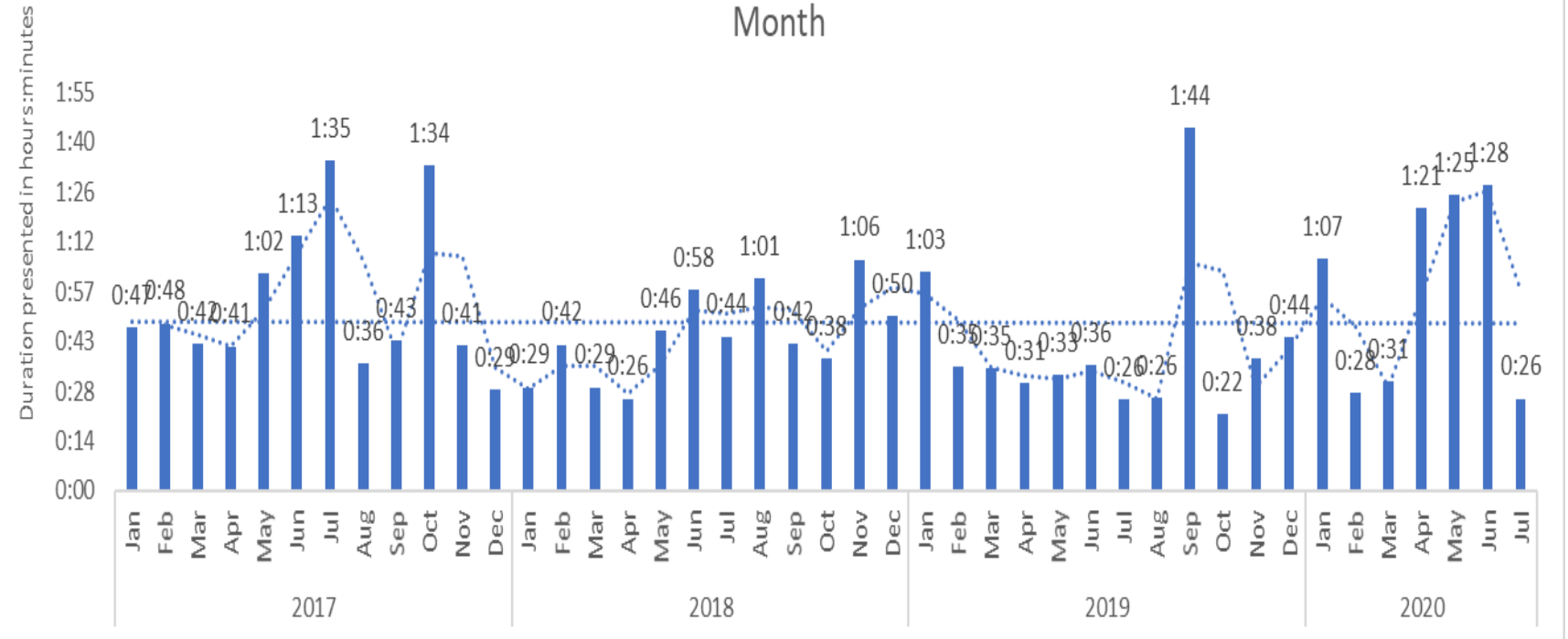
Involuntary Room Confinements Trend





Involuntary Room Confinements Average Durations

Average Duration of Involuntary Room Confinements at MA DYS Residential Programs by Month

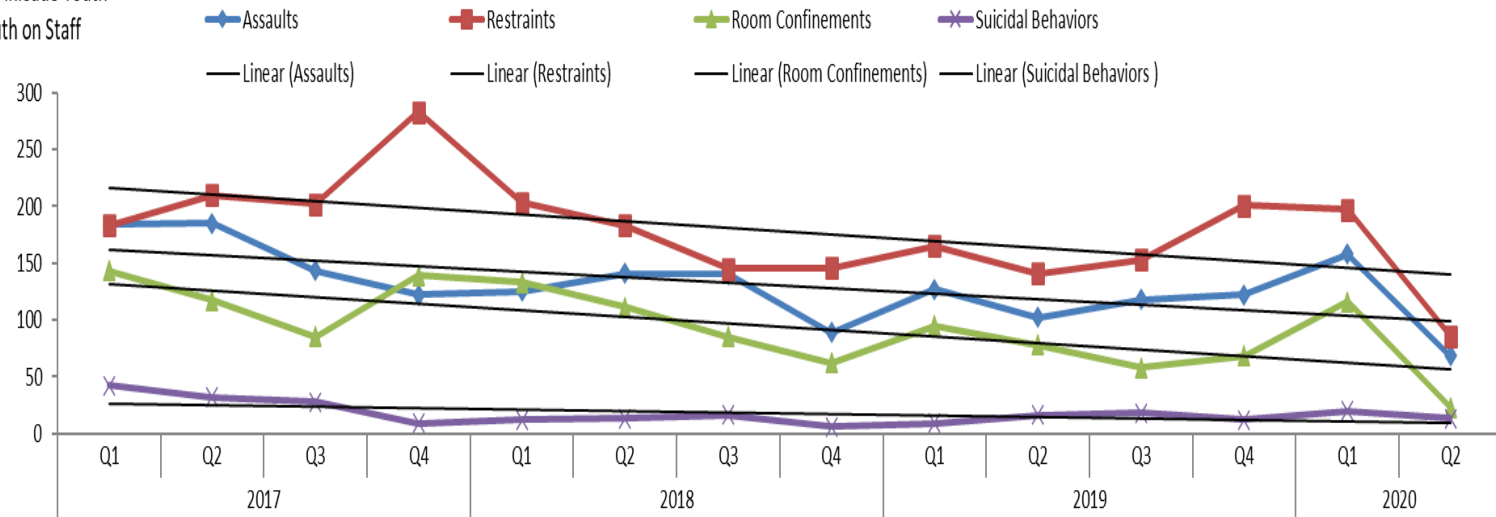




Assaultive, Restraints, Confinements, and Suicidal Behaviors

DYS Assaults, Restraints, Room Confinements, & Suicidal Behaviors

Assault Numbers include Youth on Youth and Youth on Staff Assaults



	2017				2018				2019				2020	
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
Assaults	184	185	143	122	125	141	140	89	127	102	118	122	158	68
Restraints	183	210	202	283	203	183	145	146	165	141	153	201	197	86
Room Confinements	143	117	85	139	133	111	85	62	95	78	58	68	116	23
Suicidal Behaviors	42	32	28	9	12	13	16	6	9	16	18	12	20	13