



Monthly Update

February 2011

**George P. Bithos, D.D.S., Ph.D.**  
**Independent Ombudsman**

The Office of the Independent Ombudsman for State Supported Living Centers (SSLCs) was established by the 81<sup>st</sup> legislature. Our mission is to serve as an independent, impartial, and confidential resource, assisting our clients, their families, and the public with services and related complaints and issues, which deal with the state supported living centers. The purpose of this report is to highlight the activity of the Office for all interested parties for the month of February 2011.

The Office has been working to continue equipping the Assistant Independent Ombudsmen with the training needed to perform duties specified in Senate Bill 643. As part of the training and team building effort, the **Peer Mentoring Project** has begun. This is a collaborative process in which the Assistant Ombudsmen visit each other's assigned SSLC, meet and interview staff, tour and observe the operations of the facilities.



**FY11 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Facebook Activity**

<b>Average Active Users</b>	<b>16.6</b>
<b>Average Visits Per Week</b>	<b>37.0</b>

We are also continuing to promote our office as directed by Senate Bill 643, Section 555.058. The **Facebook** page has been established since December 2010. There have been little to no public comment thus far, but the page has regular usage.

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**ACRONYMS**

- ADOP – Assistant Director of Programs
- AIO – Assistant Independent Ombudsman
- DOJ – United States Department of Justice
- LAR – Legally Authorized Representative
- OIO – Office of the Independent Ombudsman
- QMRP – Qualified Mental Retardation Professional
- PSP – Personal Support Plan

**PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Investigations** – Conduct investigations of complaints, other than complaints alleging criminal offenses or the abuse, neglect or exploitation of a resident or client, if the office determines that a resident or family member may be in need of assistance from the office or raises the possibility of a systemic issue in the center's provision of service.

**Referrals** – Immediately refer complaints of abuse and neglect, criminal offense, or employee misconduct to the appropriate authorities.

**Incident Review** – Review final reports and complaints referred back to the facility by DFPS, and monitor the actions taken by the facility to address DFPS recommendations. Evaluate the process by which a center investigates, reviews, and reports an injury to a resident or an unusual incident.

**Program Review** – Evaluate delivery of services and conduct audits of:

- staff to client ratio
- provision and adequacy of training
- the center’s policies, practices, and procedures to ensure that each resident is encouraged to exercise his or her rights.

**Advocacy** – Provide assistance to those the Assistant Ombudsmen determined to be in need of assistance, including mediating or advocating with an agency, provider, or other person in the best interest of the resident.

## **ACTIVITY**

In addition to duties fulfilling the primary responsibilities explained above, the Assistant Ombudsmen perform other duties that enhance the role of the Office of the Independent Ombudsman. Those listed below are tasks that were completed beyond normal and routine activities.

### **Jill Antilley, Abilene SSLC**

- Attended Visions (PSP training).
- Ombudsman brochure was included in the Maple Street Messenger (Maple Street Messenger) for January and February.
- Traveled to Corpus Christi for the Peer Mentoring Project. Met with the CC Director, ADOP, and a self advocate. Toured the CCSSLC facility.
- Corpus Christi AIO visited the Abilene facility as part of the Peer Mentoring Project.
- Attended exit of the DOJ Court Monitors.
- Attended the General staff meeting for the facility.
- Continued participation in Rights Program Review Workgroup.

### **Jessica White, Austin SSLC**

- Visited Brenham State Supported Living Center for two days as part of Peer Mentoring Project that allows us to see how other centers operate.
- Brenham AIO visited my center for two days for the Peer Mentoring Project.
- Program Review Workgroup met two times to review processed for auditing rights of individuals.
- Attended new employee presentation to explain role of OIO.
- Helped facilitate the Self-Advocacy meeting.

### **Susan Aguilar, Brenham SSLC**

- Participated in Peer Mentor Project at Austin SSLC. Toured campus, met staff and individuals, accompanied AIO on case activities, and observed meetings as part of this project.
- Hosted Austin AIO at Brenham for two days as part of the Peer Mentor Project.
- Participated in Program Review process workgroup to develop training portion of audit requirement.

### **Dee Medina, Corpus Christi SSLC**

- Dr. George Bithos gave a presentation on the OIO and its relationship to Adult Protective Services at the APS Regional Meeting. He addressed approximately 20 APS Investigators, Supervisors, and regional support staff who routinely conduct investigations at facilities. The purpose of the presentation was to assist APS in complying with their new mandate to forward "Administrative Referrals" to facilities when client rights issues are identified.
- Traveled to Abilene SSLC as part of the Peer Mentor Project and had the Abilene AIO visit this campus as well.
- Working with the new Human Rights Officer regarding the election of new officers and increasing resident participation. It is anticipated that the Self Advocacy meetings will resume March 2011.
- Attended review of PSP at a behavioral health home and observed the Personal Support Team's implementation of the new Supporting Visions approach.
- Visited all the homes on campus and ensured OIO posters were visible and posted.
- Met with staff on several homes and departments about the role of the Assistant Ombudsman (daily and ongoing).
- Participated in workgroup which met to discuss audit procedures.
- Met with new QMRP to discuss role of AIO.

### **Erin Knight, Denton SSLC**

- Received CPR recertification.
- Isabel Ponce, El Paso SSLC visited the Denton SSLC as part of the Peer Mentoring Project.
- Assisted in New Employee Orientation Rights training while promoting awareness of OIO.
- Attended Self Advocacy Meeting/CLOIP presentation, 2/25/2011 (OIO handout distributed).
- Continued participation in Rights Program Review Workgroup.
- Continued to update OIO Facebook/social media page.

### **Isabel Ponce, El Paso SSLC**

- Met and visited with members of the Parent Committee to introduce myself and to discuss and inform them of the role of the Assistant Independent Ombudsman. Answered questions and invited comments and suggestions.
- Met with the Settlement Agreement Coordinator to review DOJ monitoring and subsequent Plan of Improvement.
- Conducted my first presentation with new staff during Orientation.
- Attended the exit of the ESSLC mock survey which is a quality assurance effort by DADS .
- Sent correspondence to the Chair of the Senate HSC Committee to introduce the AIO.
- Sent out letters of introduction to parents and legal guardians.
- Visited the Denton SSLC as part of the Peer Mentoring Project, working with the assigned AIO, Erin Knight, on current activities.
- Distributed updated OIO posters throughout the campus.

### **Ramona Rocha-Hughes, Lubbock SSLC**

- Attended Lubbock Regional MHMR's HRC as their community representative.
- Presented Ombudsman Power Point at NEO on 02/03/2011 & 02/18/2011.
- Jane Dhalke, San Antonio SSLC, visited Lubbock for the Peer Mentoring Project 02/16-17/2011.

### **Mary Stovall, Lufkin SSLC**

- Attended an informative town hall meeting that was mainly set up as a question/answer session by the Director and Assistant Director of Programs to address staffs' questions/concerns.
- Met with Center's executive staff and representatives from DFPS, OIG, and DADS Regulatory to discuss relevant issues involving all agencies.
- Attended a Center self-advocacy meeting attended by numerous individuals and staff, as well.
- Routinely conferred with a local attorney and court coordinator to facilitate an individual's case subsequent to her arrest.
- Met with direct care staff and a DADS Regulatory investigator to inform them of purpose and function of OIO as it relates to their specific job duties.

### **Lynda Mitchell, Mexia SSLC**

- Made OIO presentations in two new employee orientation groups and distributed handouts.
- Met with Melissa Deere who visited MSSLC for Peer Mentoring Project. The facility Director, ADOP, and department heads were visited, including the Forensic Services Director, as well as a

tour of the facility, attending Incident Management meeting, attending a PSP, meeting a self-advocate and working on an investigation.

- Served on several work groups, one for establishment of a “Hotline” for individuals to be able to call and talk to someone when they are upset, in order to prevent or minimize Unauthorized Departures. The 2<sup>nd</sup> workgroup was for the development of guidelines for monthly reward trips (special trips directly tied to positive behaviors being exhibited). The 3<sup>rd</sup> workgroup is working to resolve the issue of individuals with modified texture diets being able to purchase items at the Canteen that are not of the needed texture.
- Met with new QMRPs to discuss role of OIO.
- Participated in AIO workgroup to develop tools for Program Review in the area of Training.
- Meetings with the QMRP Director to discuss issues and concerns noted while in attendance in other meetings.

#### **Richmond SSLC**

- Position vacated in December 2010. Office covered by AIO at Brenham SSLC until newly hired AIO begins in April 2011.

#### **James Arnold, ICF Component of the Rio Grande State Center**

- Participated in interviews with staff to get an idea of areas that they could benefit from extra training.
- Worked on different types of questions to probe for ways to strengthen direct care staff and help them become a part of the process.
- Participated in workgroup to develop Program Review Process in area of training.

#### **Melissa Deere, San Angelo SSLC**

- Gave presentation to new employees of San Angelo facility to explain role of AIO.
- Visited Mexia SSLC and interviewed a number of managers as part of Peer Mentoring Project.
- Participated in workgroup to develop a tool to evaluate training at the facilities.

#### **Jane Dahlke, San Antonio SSLC**

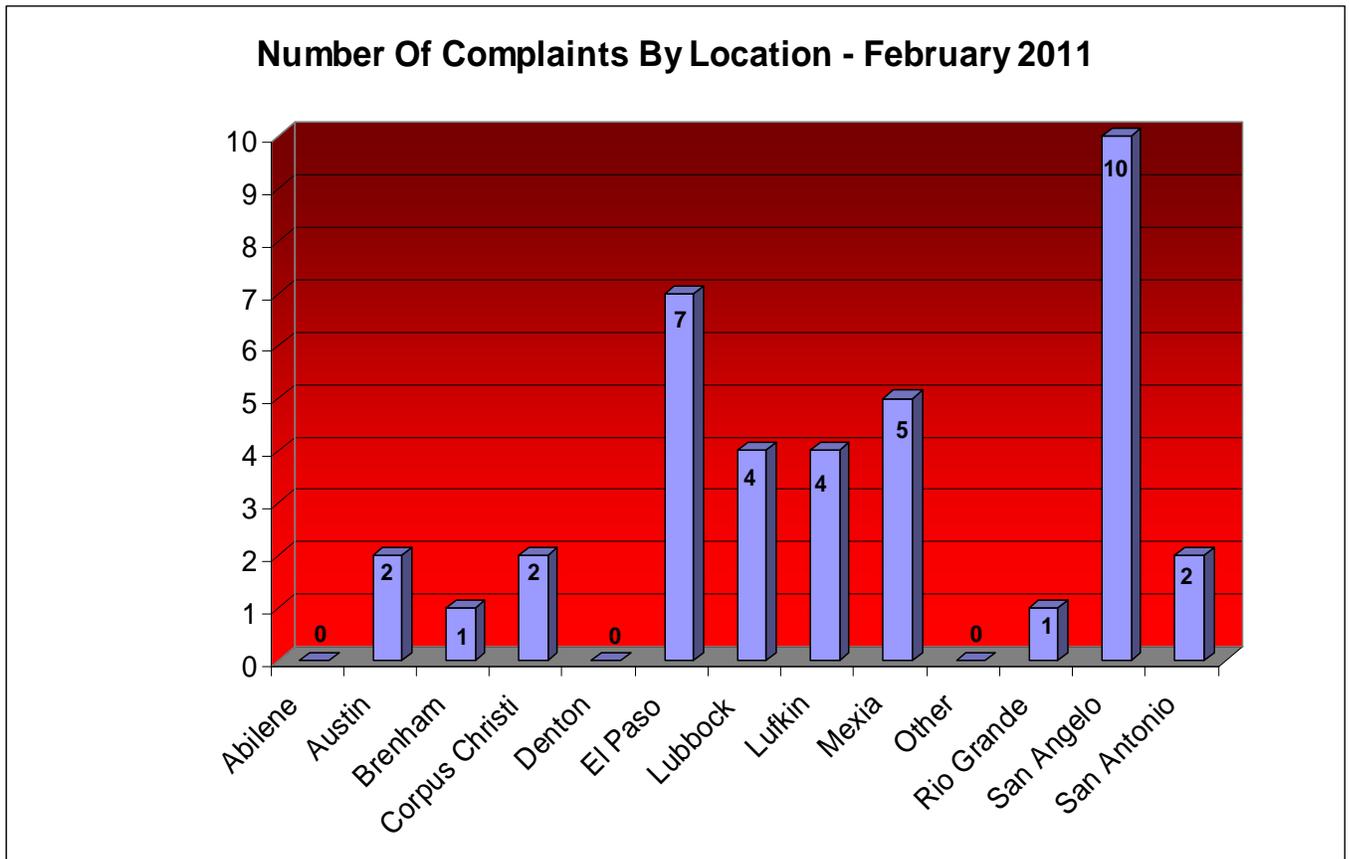
- Participated in Team Project meetings regarding monitoring ratios.
- Traveled to Lubbock for two day Peer Mentoring Project Sessions. This included interviews of administration/ management staff and observations of facility operations.
- Promoted awareness by attending and participating in monthly Self-Advocacy meeting.
- Participated in Family Association meeting.

- Participated in Scan Call meeting coordinated by Assistant Commissioner Adams to update families on legislative issues.
- Attended entrance and exit of DOJ Monitor visit.

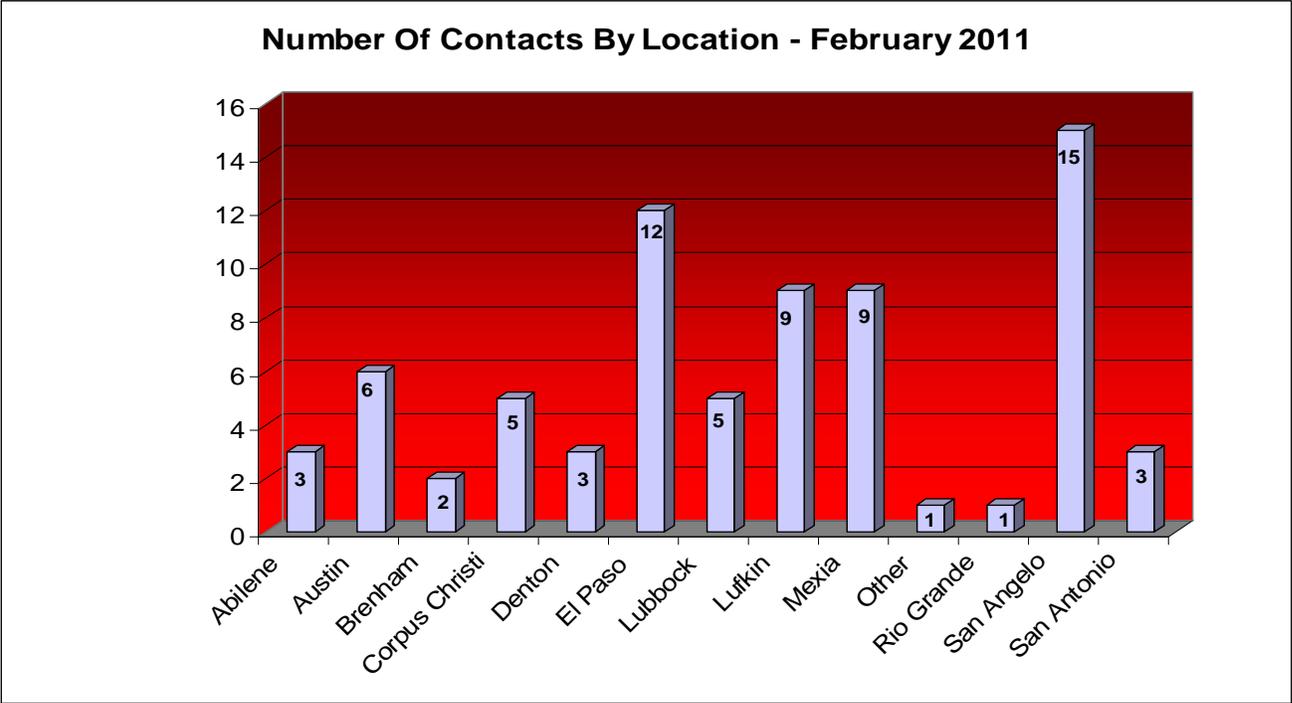
**DATA**

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction, either written or verbal, that initiates an investigation, which is a primary responsibility of the Office for the Independent Ombudsman. The Assistant Independent Ombudsman at the facility where the individual resides is assigned to investigate and resolve the issue, as applicable.

The following chart expresses the number of complaints received by the OIO at each facility. There were a total of 38 complaints in the month of February.



The Office of the Independent Ombudsman may also be contacted with cases that can be classified as appeals, consults, inquiries, or referrals. These types of contacts are combined with complaints to provide a total number of contacts. There were a total of 74 contacts for the month of February.



The following chart shows the relationship of the contacts to the consumer at all the facilities for the month of February 2011.

