

NEWS



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Department of Human Services

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**Anne Marie Ambrose,
Commissioner**

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DHS to Break Ground on New Youth Study Center

Philadelphia--The Philadelphia Department of Human Services will break ground on a new state-of-the-art Youth Study Center at 48th and Haverford Avenue in Philadelphia on Tuesday April 21st at 10:30am. The event will feature remarks by Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell, and DHS Commissioner Anne Marie Ambrose.

The Department also announced the appointment of Timene Farlow as the new Deputy Commissioner of Juvenile Justice Services (JJS), which includes responsibility for the operation of the Youth Study Center. Farlow comes to her new position with a wealth of Juvenile Justice experience. Since 1999, she has served in various capacities within DHS including Social Work Supervisor, Director of Professional Services, and Director of Court and Community Services. Most recently she served as Director of Provider Relations and Evaluation of Programs.

The Youth Study Center is a secure detention center that provides temporary care and custody for alleged and adjudicated delinquents, age 13 and over, who are awaiting court action. Its purpose is to provide protection to the community as well as a safe and secure setting for youth while ensuring residents are available for scheduled court hearings. The Center admits approximately 5,000 youth annually for assessment and placement as directed by the courts.

In praising the design of the new facility, Mayor Nutter, noted "The new Youth Study Center reflects the city's commitment not only to protect the safety of Philadelphia residents but also to help at-risk youth develop into productive, law-abiding citizens," said Nutter.

The new center will replace the City's over crowded 54-year-old youth detention facility, which closed last year. That facility, which opened in 1952, was in poor physical condition and had an inefficient layout that did not reflect current "best practices" for juvenile detention facility operation and design. While the new facility is being built, the Center will continue to function at its interim location at the site of the former Eastern Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute (EPPI).

According to DHS Commissioner, Anne Marie Ambrose, the new 150-bed center will meet the national best practice standards and guidelines, along with the Commonwealth's guidelines on Residential Child Care. At 160,000 square feet, it will also be almost twice the size of the former 97,000-square foot center, which will alleviate overcrowding and provide more adequate space for juvenile housing, program administration, education, visitation, dining, indoor and outdoor recreation, medical, along with court and hearing rooms as well as space for community meetings.

"We are thrilled to be breaking ground on a new Youth Study Center that will enable DHS to provide better care and services to youth in detention. The thoughtful design of the center will allow us to enhance programming for youth and better ensure the security of youth, staff and the community," she said.

The new building will also be cost effective and environmentally friendly. Designed as the first LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design - Silver Rating) certified building to be constructed by the City, the facility is more energy efficient and will provide substantial cost savings in fuel consumption.

The location of the new center is easily accessible by public transportation. The exterior of the facility will resemble a school and will include aesthetically pleasing outdoor recreation areas, walkways and quiet areas. The interior space offers greater flexibility for programming and will allow DHS to provide services and activities geared to specific populations such as older youth or females.

The new Youth Study Center is expected to be completed by fall 2011.

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The Philadelphia Department of Human Services is the City agency charged with protecting children from abuse, neglect, and delinquency; ensuring their safety and permanency in nurturing home environments; and strengthening and preserving families by enhancing community-based prevention services. In partnership with community organizations, DHS provides services to strengthen the overall well being of Philadelphia children, youth, and families using a customer focused approach that is responsive to evolving community needs.

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