



Making a Healthy Transition at DJS

Every day at the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS), young people are placed and shifted into various programs throughout the State and for some this can cause unwanted anxiety. Change is hard, especially for youth. This week, girls from the J. DeWeese Carter Center will be packing their bags and moving more than 200 miles to the new Mountain View girl's facility, on the campus of Backbone Mountain Youth Center in Western Maryland. Mountain View was the name selected by the youth at Carter.

Carter, a girls' facility in Chestertown, is closing and providing the youth a new opportunity to learn in a different environment. Maintaining services for our youth is our priority and by reducing our footprint, we can focus our resources on our youth rather than maintaining and operating largely empty facilities.

The girls will now be in a staff secure facility, with a six-bed capacity, which affords them significant individual attention and access to community resources. In addition, our girls will no longer have to receive meals from a contract vendor. Mountain View will share the on campus dining facilities with the other youth at Backbone Mountain. The new residents will also have access to a college program in Garrett County, share ample recreation space, and participate in more off-ground outings.

Mountain View will have their own dedicated team of staff. Behavioral Health staff were specifically chosen based on their interest and experience working with girls. Behavioral Health staff at Carter and Mountain View have met to discuss each youth's needs and strengths. All youth that are transitioning have already met virtually with the new superintendent and the assigned behavioral health staff. Additionally, Behavioral health staff at Carter will be available for a period of time to meet with youth and families via virtual sessions to ease this transition. Trauma Informed Care training, as well as other professional development will be provided to staff to address the specialized needs of our female youth.

As with the medical services provided to the girls at Carter, Mountain View will have an on-site nurse to meet the medical needs of each youth. Additionally, there is an on-call physician and a designated hospital emergency contact.

During this transition, the Department understands the need for visitation. The new residents at Mountain View will continue to have ample visitation with their parents/guardians virtually and when in-person visitation returns, DJS will continue to offer transportation to parents/guardians for visitation at Mountain View.

DJS staff are eager to welcome the new youth to Mountain View and make their home away from home a positive experience.