



STATE OF NEW YORK  
**OFFICE OF THE STATE COMPTROLLER**

November 6, 2007

Karen M. Carpenter-Palumbo  
Commissioner  
Office of Alcoholism and  
Substance Abuse Services  
1450 Western Avenue  
Albany, NY 12203-3526

Re: Report 2006-S-98

Dear Commissioner Carpenter-Palumbo:

Pursuant to the State Comptroller's authority as set forth in Article V, Section 1 of the State Constitution and Article II, Section 8 of the State Finance Law, we audited selected aspects of the security controls in place over the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services' computer network. Our audit covered the period October 23, 2006 through May 15, 2007.

**A. Background**

The mission of the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) is to improve the lives of New Yorkers by ensuring quality prevention and treatment services for chemical dependence and compulsive gambling, and promoting recovery from addiction. In addition to managing 13 State-operated Addiction Treatment Centers, OASAS licenses service providers and addiction professionals, and funds approximately 1,400 treatment and 400 prevention programs that provide services to more than 100,000 individuals monthly.

OASAS has created a computer network (Network) to help carry out its duties. OASAS employees use the Network to access the Internet and e-mail, agency applications, and shared files. OASAS's Office of Information Services (Information Services) maintains the Network by supporting its servers, configuring its hardware, setting up desktop computers, providing software support, ensuring Network connectivity for all business units, and managing Network devices. Information Services provides technology services to approximately 1,000 users in its central office, the Addiction Treatment Centers, and five field office locations.

OASAS must comply with New York State's Cyber Security Policy (Security Policy), which is promulgated by the Office of Cyber Security and Critical Infrastructure Coordination (CSCIC). The Security Policy defines the minimum information security requirements that all State entities must meet.

**B. Audit Scope, Objective and Methodology**

We audited selected aspects of the security controls in place over the Network. Our audit covered the period October 23, 2006 through May 15, 2007. The objective of our performance audit was to determine whether the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) has established adequate security controls to minimize the risks of unauthorized access to its data and resources. Our audit provided a snapshot of the Network's security controls at a particular point in time.

To accomplish our objective, we reviewed OASAS policies and procedures relating to computer networks, equipment and applications. We interviewed OASAS technical and facility staff responsible for administering Network security and operations. We also examined agency records and reports pertinent to our audit scope. In addition, in coordination with OASAS officials, we performed external and internal vulnerability assessments of the Network. In performing these assessments, we used various tools and techniques to identify Network vulnerabilities and to determine how these vulnerabilities could be exploited.

We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Such standards require that we plan and perform our audit to adequately assess those OASAS operations that are included within the audit scope. Further, these standards require that we understand the OASAS's internal control structure and compliance with those laws, rules and regulations that are relevant to the operations that are included in our audit scope. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting transactions recorded in the accounting and operating records and applying such other auditing procedures as we consider necessary in the circumstances. An audit also includes assessing the estimates, judgments and decisions made by management. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our findings, conclusions and recommendations.

In addition to being the State Auditor, the Comptroller performs certain other constitutionally and statutorily mandated duties as the chief fiscal officer of New York State. These include operating the State's accounting system; preparing the State's financial statements; and approving State contracts, refunds, and other payments. In addition, the Comptroller appoints members to certain boards, commissions and public authorities, some of whom have minority voting rights. These duties may be considered management functions for purposes of evaluating organizational independence under generally accepted government auditing standards. In our opinion, these functions do not affect our ability to conduct independent audits of program performance.

**C. Results of Audit**

Detailed results of our audit were provided to OASAS officials during the conduct of our audit. The details of our findings and recommendations are not included here due to the sensitivity of the information and the potential risk associated with the release of such information. As part of our audit, we identified certain areas in which the controls needed to be improved. OASAS officials stated they have begun to make improvements in these areas.

**Recommendation**

*Implement the specific recommendations for strengthening Network security that were provided to OASAS officials during the audit.*

We provided a draft copy of this report to OASAS officials for their review and comment. Their comments were considered in preparing this report, and are included as Appendix A.

Within 90 days of the final release of this report, as required by Section 170 of the Executive Law, the Commissioner of OASAS shall report to the Governor, the State Comptroller, and the leaders of the Legislature and fiscal committees, advising what steps were taken to implement the recommendations contained herein, and where recommendations were not implemented, the reasons therefor.

Major contributors to this report include Nadine Morrell, Mark Ren, James Edge, Jennifer Van Tassel, Andrew White and Dana Newhouse.

We wish to thank the management and staff of the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services for the courtesy and cooperation extended to our auditors during this audit.

Very truly yours,

Brian Reilly  
Audit Manager

cc: Lisa Ng, Division of Budget



Eliot Spitzer  
*Governor*

NEW YORK STATE  
OFFICE OF ALCOHOLISM  
AND  
SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES  
1450 Western Avenue  
Albany, New York 12203-3526

Karen M. Carpenter-Palumbo  
*Commissioner*

October 4, 2007

Mr. Brian Reilly  
Audit Manager  
Office of the State Comptroller  
Division of State Government Accountability  
110 State Street, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Albany, NY 12236

Dear Mr. Reilly:

The New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services has read OSC Network Security Control Report # 2006-s-98 and agrees with the findings.

The findings in the Report are consistent with the comments made by the auditors at the exit conference. Overall, the audit was a positive assessment of OASAS' Information Technology security practices but did identify certain areas for improvement. OASAS recognizes the value of implementing these findings and has already addressed several of the issues. The remaining issues identified in the audit are being addressed by the OASAS Information Security Officer and IT staff and will be completed within the calendar year.

We view this audit as one additional aspect of the services we employ to ensure the confidentiality, integrity and protection of OASAS data and information technology systems. We appreciate the professional work that your audit staff performed and have found their findings and recommendations useful and constructive.

Thank you for OSC's assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen M. Carpenter-Palumbo". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over the typed name and title.

Karen M. Carpenter-Palumbo  
Commissioner

cc: Mary Ann DiChristopher  
David Gardam  
Paul Maguire

