



Putting People First



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Transmitted Via Email

The Honorable Thomas P. DiNapoli
New York State Comptroller
Office of the State Comptroller
110 State Street
Albany, NY 12236

Re: OSC Audit Report 2008-S-107

Dear Comptroller DiNapoli:

Attached is the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities' comments on the Office of the State Comptroller's Final Audit Report (No. 2008-S-107) entitled: "Controls over Selected Overtime Payments to Taconic Employees For the Period April 1, 2007 through July 2, 2008."

This response is being submitted to you in accordance with Section 170 of the Executive Law.

Sincerely,

Diana Jones Ritter
Commissioner

DJR/mep
Attachment

Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD)
Response to the Office of the State Comptroller's (OSC)
Final Audit Report (Report No: 2008-S-107)
Controls over Selected Overtime Payments to Taconic Employees
For the Period April 1, 2007 through July 2, 2008

Recommendation #1:

Look into the 11 unresolved instances cited above to determine whether the associated overtime payments were valid. If not, take appropriate action to recover the overpayments.

Response

All instances cited were reviewed. Ten of the eleven were appropriate and accurate. The final instance was verified as an overpayment and appropriate action has been taken to recover the one hour discrepancy.

Recommendation #2:

Ensure Taconic supervisors are aware of their responsibility to sign off on all payroll and overtime related documents (i.e., authorization rosters, time sheets, and sign-in/sign-out sheets). Periodically monitor their compliance with this responsibility.

Response

Subsequent to the OSC audit, Taconic DDSO (along with all locations within OMRDD) changed its process for reporting and recording time worked and payroll validation, by using the Time Information Management Electronic System (TIMES). This automated system is designed to provide electronic recording and tracking of OMRDD employees' attendance and leave accruals.

Certification of pay period attendance and leave information, as entered into TIMES, is the responsibility of the supervisor and/or the timekeeper. Supervisory staff will continue to be required to attend training specific to TIMES and their role in monitoring the timekeeping process.

The Taconic DDSO Human Resources office will randomly conduct audits, comparing Sign In/Sign Out records against TIMES pay period sheets.

Recommendation #3:

Ensure HR does not approve and process any payroll or overtime payments where properly authorized supporting documents are not submitted. Periodically monitor HR's compliance with this requirement.

Response

As stated in Recommendation No. 2, Taconic DDSO has changed its process for reporting and recording time worked and payroll validation. The attendance portion of the process (TIMES) is now fully integrated with the payroll (PayServ) system. As a result, the timekeeper and supervisor are both responsible for certifying the attendance information. This change removes HR from the approval process, and focuses their responsibilities on auditing Sign In/Sign Out records against TIMES pay period records.

Recommendation #4:

Continue to explore new and innovative ways to maximize staff efficiency and reduce overtime costs.

Response

During FY 08/09, Taconic DDSO reduced its overtime by 65,717 hours from the previous year. To date, this trend has been maintained during the current fiscal year. The DDSO also continues to explore new ways to maximize staff efficiency and reduce overtime costs, for example:

- Weekly meetings are held to review individual necessity of 1:1 assignments.
- Reviews have been scheduled for each site by shift, which have identified improvements in staffing assignments.
- Supervisory staff use TIMES to track current overtime information.

Additionally, OMRDD Central Office monitors overtime via the following reports:

- Pay Period: Monitors hours and high overtime users for each DDSO.
- Monthly: Monitors high overtime earners at each DDSO.
- Quarterly: Compares overtime hours and dollars to the same quarter from the previous year to show year-to-year trends for each DDSO.

OMRDD's Division of Workforce and Talent Management has also increased its support to the DDSOs in this area, and has released several guidance documents. The Division has also entered into discussions with the unions regarding the definition of work location, and establishing new local labor/management agreements that support the effective deployment of human capital throughout the DDSOs. These combined efforts will enable us to maximize the effective use of our resources and help to decrease overtime costs.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank your audit team for their professionalism, and also for the opportunity to respond to the findings contained in this report. Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Mary Peck, Director of Internal Control, at 518.474.4376 or Mary.E.Peck@omr.state.ny.us.