

Division of Health Service Regulation

STATEMENT OF DEFICIENCIES AND PLAN OF CORRECTION	(X1) PROVIDER/SUPPLIER/CLIA IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: MHL080-223	(X2) MULTIPLE CONSTRUCTION A. BUILDING: _____ B. WING _____	(X3) DATE SURVEY COMPLETED R 02/21/2024
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NAME OF PROVIDER OR SUPPLIER STEPPING STONE SERVICES	STREET ADDRESS, CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE 512 WEST HORAH STREET SALISBURY, NC 28144
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(X4) ID PREFIX TAG	SUMMARY STATEMENT OF DEFICIENCIES (EACH DEFICIENCY MUST BE PRECEDED BY FULL REGULATORY OR LSC IDENTIFYING INFORMATION)	ID PREFIX TAG	PROVIDER'S PLAN OF CORRECTION (EACH CORRECTIVE ACTION SHOULD BE CROSS-REFERENCED TO THE APPROPRIATE DEFICIENCY)	(X5) COMPLETE DATE
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V 000	<p>INITIAL COMMENTS</p> <p>An annual and follow up survey was completed on February 21, 2024. Deficiencies were cited.</p> <p>This facility is licensed for the following service category: 10A NCAC 27G .1700 Residential Treatment Staff Secure for Children or Adolescents.</p> <p>This facility is licensed for 4 and currently has a census of 4. The survey sample consisted of audits of 3 current clients.</p>	V 000		
V 108	<p>27G .0202 (F-I) Personnel Requirements</p> <p>10A NCAC 27G .0202 PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS</p> <p>(f) Continuing education shall be documented.</p> <p>(g) Employee training programs shall be provided and, at a minimum, shall consist of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) general organizational orientation; (2) training on client rights and confidentiality as delineated in 10A NCAC 27C, 27D, 27E, 27F and 10A NCAC 26B; (3) training to meet the mh/dd/sa needs of the client as specified in the treatment/habilitation plan; and (4) training in infectious diseases and bloodborne pathogens. <p>(h) Except as permitted under 10a NCAC 27G .5602(b) of this Subchapter, at least one staff member shall be available in the facility at all times when a client is present. That staff member shall be trained in basic first aid including seizure management, currently trained to provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation and trained in the Heimlich maneuver or other first aid techniques such as those provided by Red Cross, the American Heart Association or their</p>	V 108		

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LABORATORY DIRECTOR'S OR PROVIDER/SUPPLIER REPRESENTATIVE'S SIGNATURE

TITLE

(X6) DATE

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V 108	<p>Continued From page 1</p> <p>equivalence for relieving airway obstruction. (i) The governing body shall develop and implement policies and procedures for identifying, reporting, investigating and controlling infectious and communicable diseases of personnel and clients.</p> <p>This Rule is not met as evidenced by: Based on record reviews and interviews, the facility failed to ensure 4 of 5 staff (staff #1, staff #2, the Associate Professional (AP) and the Qualified Professional/Licensee (QP/L) were trained to meet the individualized needs of the clients as specified in the treatment/habilitation plan. The findings are:</p> <p>Review on 2/21/24 of staff #1's record revealed: -A hire date of 12/26/23 -A job description of Paraprofessional -No training on sexualized behaviors</p> <p>Review on 2/21/24 of staff #2's record revealed: -A hire date of 8/31/22 -A job description of Paraprofessional -No training on sexualized behaviors</p> <p>Review on 2/21/24 of the AP's record revealed: -A hire date of 8/31/22 -A job description of AP -No training on sexualized behaviors</p> <p>Review on 2/21/24 of the QP/L's record revealed: -A hire date of 5/6/21 -A job description of QP -No training on sexualized behaviors</p>	V 108		
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V 108	<p>Continued From page 2</p> <p>Review on 2/21/24 of client #1's record revealed: -An admission date of 1/27/23 -Diagnoses of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Child Neglect, Conduct Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD), History of Alcoholism, Impulsive Personality Disorder, Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder, Moderate Depression Disorder, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Borderline Intellectual Functioning and Victim of Child Sexual Abuse -Age 17 -An assessment dated 1/27/23 noted "was previously in a Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF), wants to get a job when he is on own, biological parents were neglectful, needs 24/7 residential services that has rules, structure and point level system, does not have any family that participates in his therapy, is on a daily schedule depending on his level, has a scheduled time to shower, has one assigned chore per day, is responsible for ensuring his dirty clothes are in the basket, is responsible for making his bed and keep his room clean, is not employed, needs to be provided with transportation to and from any medical, therapy or appointment needs, has access to health care and mental health care as needed or scheduled, does not use alcohol but he has been caught vaping and having cigarettes, medications are administered by staff, needs encouragement to make positive choices, needs to be encouraged to accept responsibility, needs to think about consequences before making a decision or what kind of risk he could be putting himself into, has a history of being assaultive, violence and trauma, should complete all levels of sexual abuse specific treatment including progress through the four states of treatment, full and responsible acknowledgment of sexual</p>	V 108		
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STEPPING STONE SERVICES

**512 WEST HORAH STREET
SALISBURY, NC 28144**

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Continued From page 3

abuse, thinking errors, development of sexual empathy, completion of proven relapse prevention plan to lower the risk of sexual re-offense and needs to make significant improvements in expressing his feels in a healthy way and recognizing the causes to help minimize emotional outbursts, is very manipulative and deceitful with past aggressive behaviors towards family and sexual assault (rape in the first degree and crimes against nature) towards a sibling (younger sister)."

-An updated treatment plan dated 1/10/24 noted "will learn to enhance healthy skills in areas of anger control, self-care, social skills, and problem solving through participation/attendance of Rehabilitation groups related to Basic Living Skills, Social Skills, Interdependent Living Skills, Self-Care, Lifestyle Changes and Recovery Principals, will utilize skills learned by displaying an ability to control behavior that is unproductive and/or illegal, express anger in a healthy manner in the moment, understand motivations for unproductive behavior and display ability to demonstrate appropriate basic living skills and social skills, and will participate in therapeutic program services while complying with all program rules and decreasing rule violations in the home, school and community from 5 out of 7 days per week."

Review on 2/21/24 of client #2's record revealed:

- An admission date of 12/18/23
- Diagnoses of Autism Spectrum Disorder, Conduct Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), Severe, ADHD, Encopresis and Borderline Intellectual Functioning
- Age 17
- An assessment dated 11/6/23 noted "is a 17 year old 9th grader (special education) who has been referred for residential treatment secondary to

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V 108	<p>Continued From page 4</p> <p>verbal and physical aggression, mood swings, impulse control, extreme oppositional defiance, and maladaptive behaviors (fecal smearing, cursing, head banging) which has resulted in a failed group home placement as well as one prior inpatient psychiatric hospitalization in the last year, has successfully completed a residential treatment program and has alleviated his physical and verbal aggression, diminished his maladaptive behaviors to include no instances of fecal smearing or toileting issues, limited amounts of cursing, no instances of head banging and minor amounts of oppositional behaviors, has Autism and does well in an environment that is structured, does a good job of following the rules and helping others understand the important of following rules, was adopted at age 4, has poor social skills and academic problems, needs a level III residential placement, continue to received individual and family therapy, needs to continue to see a psychiatrist for medication management, would also benefit from a Mentor to help him bridge the gap between residential and community living, should continue to attend school in a program commensurate with his level and abilities and would benefit from a school with a strong vocational program and full range IQ score of 64."</p> <p>-A treatment plan dated 11/29/23 noted "will comply with rules and expectations of the group home, community and school consistently over the next six months by attending school daily, completing schoolwork, completing chores in the home, refraining from use of any drugs/contraband, including smoking, marijuana, cigarettes and vaping, will shower daily and as required, will attend therapy as indicated and required, will attend medication management and other appointments as required, participate in activities in the home as scheduled and indicated,</p>	V 108		
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V 108	<p>Continued From page 5</p> <p>will identify and process feelings when they occur to increase self-regulation, will process these feelings in therapy sessions with an identified counselor, with the support from family, legal guardian and service providers, will exhibit safe behaviors that do not necessitate hospitalization, will work towards increasing independent life skills (obtaining a job/volunteering, managing money) to support him in becoming an active member of his community, and will improve his communication by making informed decisions, solving problems, empathizing with others and coping with and managing my life in a healthy way,"</p> <p>Review on 2/21/24 of client #3's record revealed: -An admission date of 6/23/23 -Diagnoses of ADHD, Impulse Control Disorder, Specified Learning Disorder and Conduct Disorder -Age 16 -An assessment dated 6/23/23 noted "was previously at a facility that focused on addressing sexual harm behaviors as well as co-occurring psychiatric, behavioral and trauma related difficulties, since he was a young child there have been concerns with his aggression, stealing, living, anger outbursts and overall behavior, is impulsive and has trouble regulating his emotions, wants to work on his triggers, does not believe the rules apply to him, is in the custody of the Department of Social Services and has no contact with his adoptive family due to sexual assault of the adoptive mother., has peer conflicts, poor physical boundaries, manipulates others, conflict with caregivers and authority figures." -An updated treatment plan dated 2/13/24 noted "wants to learn to demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively with school staff, his</p>	V 108		
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V 108	<p>Continued From page 6</p> <p>family, authority figures and peers by talking in an appropriate manner being able to express his feelings, being able to share personal details without losing his temper and getting aggressive 90% of the time over the next three months, will learn to increase compliance and communication appropriately with others, will maintain compliance with program rules/expectations by listening, following through with directives within 2 prompts and maintaining respectful communication with staff and peers, will participate in therapeutic activities, appointments and meeting, put forth reasonable efforts to improve the ability to control his behaviors and improve relationships with authority figures, will improve his anger by identifying triggers, learning and implementing effective coping and communication skills when he becomes angry or frustrate without resorting to anger outbursts or acts of unsafe behaviors, will increase focus and attention by responding to directions/directives within two prompts remaining on topic and completing daily tasks, will participate in improving cognitive, physical, social, emotional, team building, hygiene, sportsmanship and independent living skills with same age peers, will go to bed on time, being quiet after lights out and going to sleep or restrng quietly throughout the night and will not exhibit any incidents of inappropriate behaviors by shift note documentation and staff report after bedtime."</p> <p>Interview on 2/20/24 with client #1 revealed: -Was previously in a locked facility in another state for "my anger and my sexual behaviors."</p> <p>Interview on 2/20/24 with client #2 revealed: -"I was in a locked facility because of my sexual behaviors. I completed my sex offender treatment."</p>	V 108		

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V 108	<p>Continued From page 7</p> <p>Interview on 2/20/24 with client #3 revealed: -"I was in a locked facility to give us a chance to step down. I was there because of my behaviors and charges ...I was charged with attempted rape. I really don't like to talk about it ..."</p> <p>Interview on 2/20/24 with staff #1 revealed: -"Was aware the clients had sexualized behaviors -"I have not had any trainings on sexualized behaviors."</p> <p>Interview on 2/20/24 with staff #2 revealed: -"Was aware the clients had sexualized behaviors. -"No, I have not witnessed anything like that (sexualized behaviors by the clients." -"Had not had training on sexualized behaviors.</p> <p>Interview on 2/21/24 with the Associate Professional revealed: -"Was aware the clients had sexualized behaviors -"Had not had any training on sexualized behaviors</p> <p>Interview on 2/21/24 with the Licensed Professional revealed: -"Clients at the facility had a history of sexualized behaviors -"In groups, if the clients are struggling with topics in that setting, I give them the opportunity for 1:1 therapy. We discuss healthy relationships with the opposite sex, communication, and the most appropriate ways to engage in relationships since most of the clients have some sort of abuse and trauma ..." -"Was not sure if the staff had received training on sexualized behaviors -"I am willing to train them."</p> <p>Interview on 2/21/24 with the QP/L revealed:</p>	V 108		
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V 108	<p>Continued From page 8</p> <p>"3 of the 4 current clients have sexualized behaviors." -None of the previous clients at the facility had sexualized behaviors -"We were trained on the population we serve. We have not had any detailed training in sexualized behaviors. We don't allow them to be alone in the same place, we monitor for appropriate boundaries and supervised them at all times."</p> <p>Further interview on 2/21/24 with the QP/L revealed: -"I plan to get together with [LP] next week. We have a staff meeting scheduled for Tuesday and we will try to set up training on sexualized behaviors then."</p>	V 108	<p><i>Sexualized training is being provided by LP on 3/16/24.</i></p>	
V 296	<p>27G .1704 Residential Tx. Child/Adol - Min. Staffing</p> <p>10A NCAC 27G .1704 MINIMUM STAFFING REQUIREMENTS</p> <p>(a) A qualified professional shall be available by telephone or page. A direct care staff shall be able to reach the facility within 30 minutes at all times.</p> <p>(b) The minimum number of direct care staff required when children or adolescents are present and awake is as follows:</p> <p>(1) two direct care staff shall be present for one, two, three or four children or adolescents;</p> <p>(2) three direct care staff shall be present for five, six, seven or eight children or adolescents; and</p> <p>(3) four direct care staff shall be present for nine, ten, eleven or twelve children or adolescents.</p> <p>(c) The minimum number of direct care staff</p>	V 296		

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V 296	<p>Continued From page 9</p> <p>during child or adolescent sleep hours is as follows:</p> <p>(1) two direct care staff shall be present and one shall be awake for one through four children or adolescents;</p> <p>(2) two direct care staff shall be present and both shall be awake for five through eight children or adolescents; and</p> <p>(3) three direct care staff shall be present of which two shall be awake and the third may be asleep for nine, ten, eleven or twelve children or adolescents.</p> <p>(d) In addition to the minimum number of direct care staff set forth in Paragraphs (a)-(c) of this Rule, more direct care staff shall be required in the facility based on the child or adolescent's individual needs as specified in the treatment plan.</p> <p>(e) Each facility shall be responsible for ensuring supervision of children or adolescents when they are away from the facility in accordance with the child or adolescent's individual strengths and needs as specified in the treatment plan.</p> <p> </p> <p>This Rule is not met as evidenced by: Based on observations, record reviews and interviews, the facility failed to have the minimum number of direct care staff required when children or adolescents are present and awake. The findings are:</p> <p>Observations on 2/20/24 from 1:25pm to 2:32pm</p>	V 296		
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V 296	<p>Continued From page 10</p> <p>of the facility revealed: -Client #1 and the Qualified Professional/Licensee arrived at the facility -There was no other staff at the facility</p> <p>Further observations on 2/20/24 from 2:32pm to 2:55pm of the facility revealed: -At 2/20/24 at 2:32pm, a second staff arrived at the facility. -At 2/20/24 at 2:38pm, a third staff arrived at the facility. -At 2/20/24 at 2:55pm, a fourth staff arrived at the facility.</p> <p>Review on 2/21/24 of client #1's record revealed: -An admission date of 1/27/23 -Diagnoses of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Child Neglect, Conduct Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD), History of Alcoholism, Impulsive Personality Disorder, Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder, Moderate Depression Disorder, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Borderline Intellectual Functioning and Victim of Child Sexual Abuse -Age 17 -An assessment dated 1/27/23 noted "was previously in a Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF), wants to get a job when he is on own, biological parents were neglectful, needs 24/7 residential services that has rules, structure and point level system, does not have any family that participates in his therapy, is on a daily schedule depending on his level, has a scheduled time to shower, has one assigned chore per day, is responsible for ensuring his dirty clothes are in the basket, is responsible for making his bed and keep his room clean, is not employed, needs to be provided with transportation to and from any medical, therapy or appointment needs, has</p>	V 296	<p><i>-I informed surveyor that there was no 1st shift and I was at the school doing a IEP meeting and a client had got suspended. I then told her I can come to the house but I have a client with me. My intention was not to go to the house for this reason.</i></p>	
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V 296	<p>Continued From page 11</p> <p>access to health care and mental health care as needed or scheduled, does not use alcohol but he has been caught vaping and having cigarettes, medications are administered by staff, needs encouragement to make positive choices, needs to be encouraged to accept responsibility, needs to think about consequences before making a decision or what kind of risk he could be putting himself into, has a history of being assaultive, violence and trauma, should complete all levels of sexual abuse specific treatment including progress through the four states of treatment, full and responsible acknowledgment of sexual abuse, thinking errors, development of sexual empathy, completion of proven relapse prevention plan to lower the risk of sexual re-offense and needs to make significant improvements in expressing his feels in a healthy way and recognizing the causes to help minimize emotional outbursts, is very manipulative and deceitful with past aggressive behaviors towards family and sexual assault (rape in the first degree and crimes against nature) towards a sibling (younger sister)."</p> <p>-An updated treatment plan dated 1/10/24 noted "will learn to enhance healthy skills in areas of anger control, self-care, social skills, and problem solving through participation/attendance of Rehabilitation groups related to Basic Living Skills, Social Skills, Interdependent Living Skills, Self-Care, Lifestyle Changes and Recovery Principals, will utilize skills learned by displaying an ability to control behavior that is unproductive and/or illegal, express anger in a healthy manner in the moment, understand motivations for unproductive behavior and display ability to demonstrate appropriate basic living skills and social skills, and will participate in therapeutic program services while complying with all program rules and decreasing rule violations in</p>	V 296		
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V 296	Continued From page 12 the home, school and community from 5 out of 7 days per week." Review on 2/21/24 of client #2's record revealed: -An admission date of 12/18/23 -Diagnoses of Autism Spectrum Disorder, Conduct Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), Severe, ADHD and Encopresis and Borderline Intellectual Functioning -Age 17 -An assessment dated 11/6/23 noted "is a 17 year old 9th grader (special education) who has been referred for residential treatment secondary to verbal and physical aggression, mood swings, impulse control, extreme oppositional defiance, and maladaptive behaviors (fecal smearing, cursing, head banging) which has resulted in a failed group home placement as well as one prior inpatient psychiatric hospitalization in the last year, has successfully completed a residential treatment program and has alleviated his physical and verbal aggression, diminished his maladaptive behaviors to include no instances of fecal smearing or toileting issues, limited amounts of cursing, no instances of head banging and minor amounts of oppositional behaviors, has Autism and does well in an environment that is structured, does a good job of following the rules and helping others understand the important of following rules, was adopted at age 4, has poor social skills and academic problems, needs a level III residential placement, continue to received individual and family therapy, needs to continue to see a psychiatrist for medication management, would also benefit from a Mentor to help him bridge the gap between residential and community living, should continue to attend school in a program commensurate with his level and abilities and would benefit from a school with a strong vocational program and full	V 296			

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STATEMENT OF DEFICIENCIES AND PLAN OF CORRECTION	(X1) PROVIDER/SUPPLIER/CLIA IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: MHL080-223	(X2) MULTIPLE CONSTRUCTION A. BUILDING: _____ B. WING _____	(X3) DATE SURVEY COMPLETED R 02/21/2024
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V 296	<p>Continued From page 13</p> <p>range IQ score of 64."</p> <p>-A treatment plan dated 11/29/23 noted "will comply with rules and expectations of the group home, community and school consistently over the next six months by attending school daily, completing schoolwork, completing chores in the home, refraining from use of any drugs/contraband, including smoking, marijuana, cigarettes and vaping, will shower daily and as required, will attend therapy as indicated and required, will attend medication management and other appointments as required, participate in activities in the home as scheduled and indicated, will identify and process feelings when they occur to increase self-regulation, will process these feelings in therapy sessions with an identified counselor, with the support from family, legal guardian and service providers, will exhibit safe behaviors that do not necessitate hospitalization, will work towards increasing independent life skills (obtaining a job/volunteering, managing money) to support him in becoming an active member of his community, and will improve his communication by making informed decisions, solving problems, empathizing with others and coping with and managing my life in a healthy way,"</p> <p>Review on 2/21/24 of client #3's record revealed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -An admission date of 6/23/23 -Diagnoses of ADHD, Impulse Control Disorder, Specified Learning Disorder and Conduct Disorder -Age 16 -An assessment dated 6/23/23 noted "was previously at a facility that focused on addressing sexual harm behaviors as well as co-occurring psychiatric, behavioral and trauma related difficulties, since he was a young child there have been concerns with his aggression, stealing, 	V 296		
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V 296	<p>Continued From page 14</p> <p>living, anger outbursts and overall behavior, is impulsive and has trouble regulating his emotions, wants to work on his triggers, does not believe the rules apply to him, is in the custody of the Department of Social Services and has no contact with his adoptive family due to sexual assault of the adoptive mother,, has peer conflicts, poor physical boundaries, manipulates others, conflict with caregivers and authority figures."</p> <p>-An updated treatment plan dated 2/13/24 noted "wants to learn to demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively with school staff, his family, authority figures and peers by talking in an appropriate manner being able to express his feelings, being able to share personal details without losing his temper and getting aggressive 90% of the time over the next three months, will learn to increase compliance and communication appropriately with others, will maintain compliance with program rules/expectations by listening, following through with directives within 2 prompts and maintaining respectful communication with staff and peers, will participate in therapeutic activities, appointments and meeting, put forth reasonable efforts to improve the ability to control his behaviors and improve relationships with authority figures, will improve his anger by identifying triggers, learning and implementing effective coping and communication skills when he becomes angry or frustrate without resorting to anger outbursts or acts of unsafe behaviors, will increase focus and attention by responding to directions/directives within two prompts remaining on topic and completing daily tasks, will participate in improving cognitive, physical, social, emotional, team building, hygiene, sportsmanship and independent living skills with same age peers, will go to bed on time, being quiet after lights out and</p>	V 296		
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V 296	<p>Continued From page 15</p> <p>going to sleep or restrng quietly throughout the night and will not exhibit any incidents of inappropriate behaviors by shift note documentation and staff report after bedtime."</p> <p>Interview on 2/20/24 with client #1 revealed: -Only one staff on 3rd shift. -"When we get up in the morning, there is only one staff."</p> <p>Interview on 2/20/24 with client #2 revealed: -"During sleep hours there is usually 1 staff because there are no issues at night and no behaviors and they stay in the living room..." -"Last night, 2/19/24, there was only one staff working."</p> <p>Interview on 2/20/24 with client #3 revealed: -Staffing depended on how many kids were at the facility. -"At night, there is only one (staff) because we are in bed." -" There have been times when we have only one staff but that's because the other staff go to college."</p> <p>Interviews on 2/20/24 with staff #1 and staff #2 revealed: -On each shift there are 2 staff.</p> <p>Interview on 2/21/24 with the Associate Professional revealed: -"There are usually 2 staff on every shift."</p> <p>Interview on 2/21/24 with the Licensed Professional revealed: -"When I am at the facility, typically, I see two staff on shift ...but I am not there at nighttime."</p> <p>Interview on 2/20/24 with the Qualified Professional/Licensee (QP/L) revealed:</p>	V 296		

RECEIVED

By Pamela S. Pridgen at 3:07 pm, Mar 24, 2024

PRINTED: 02/22/2024
FORM APPROVED

Division of Health Service Regulation

STATEMENT OF DEFICIENCIES AND PLAN OF CORRECTION	(X1) PROVIDER/SUPPLIER/CLIA IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: MHL080-223	(X2) MULTIPLE CONSTRUCTION A. BUILDING: _____ B. WING _____	(X3) DATE SURVEY COMPLETED R 02/21/2024
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V 296	<p>Continued From page 16</p> <p>- "Staff at the facility when on duty was at all times 2."</p> <p>- "On third shift last night (2/20/24), there was only one staff ..."</p> <p>Further interview on 2/21/24 with the QP/L revealed:</p> <p>- For third shift staffing, "I have two (staff) scheduled. Sometimes they call out. What I do is use the college students as 'the sleepers' with the regular staff. They (the sleepers) may leave before the clients wake up. I will continue to have 2 staff on every shift. I have no first shift unless the clients are out of school ...The sleepers have all been trained."</p> <p>This deficiency constitutes a re-cited deficiency and must be corrected within 30 days.</p>	V 296	<p><i>Owner will ensure there are two staff on third shift.</i></p>	
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P. Pridgen 3/17/24