

Audit Report

Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities Program

Mission Road Developmental Center



**Inspector
General**

Texas Health
and Human Services

April 28, 2022

OIG Report No. AUD-22-009



Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities Program

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Results in Brief

Why OIG Conducted This Audit

The Texas Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Inspector General Audit and Inspections Division (OIG Audit) audited Mission Road Developmental Center (Mission Road) due to the vulnerability of the population served. Mission Road, a Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities (DBMD) provider, provides residential care for adults with intellectual and other developmental disabilities in San Antonio, Texas. Mission Road served 23 DBMD participants residing in four assisted living facilities and received a total of \$1.24 million through the DBMD program in 2021.

Summary of Review

The audit objective was to determine whether Mission Road operated and provided residential DBMD services at its assisted living facilities in compliance with applicable contractual requirements, laws, rules, and guidelines. The audit scope covered the conditions during the on-site visits of three Mission Road assisted living facilities on December 8, 2021, and health and safety related documentation through January 2022.

Management Response

Mission Road agreed with the audit recommendations and indicated it has implemented corrective actions.

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Conclusion

Mission Road Developmental Center (Mission Road) operated and provided residential Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities (DBMD) program services at its assisted living facilities largely in compliance with applicable contractual requirements, laws, rules, and guidelines.

The Texas Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) Audit and Inspections Division (OIG Audit) reviewed the conditions of three assisted living facilities during on-site visits to determine whether they provided a safe living environment; were sufficiently secured, modified, clean, and maintained in good repair; and had fire and other hazard detection and safety systems in place. On the day of the visits:

- Fire detection and safety equipment and processes were in place at all three facilities and equipment appeared operable. However, none of the three facilities had installed carbon monoxide detectors in resident bedrooms, as required.
- All three facilities were clean, in good condition, and generally free of hazards. However, OIG Audit identified some minor hazards at one of the facilities.
- All three facilities appropriately secured and separated medications by resident and maintained complete records, as required.

Recommendations

Mission Road should:

- Develop and implement a process to identify and mitigate hazards in its facilities.
- Ensure that carbon monoxide detectors are installed in resident bedrooms.

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Audit Overview

Overall Conclusion

Mission Road Developmental Center (Mission Road) operated and provided residential Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities (DBMD) program services at its assisted living facilities largely in compliance with applicable contractual requirements, laws, rules, and guidelines.

Key Audit Results

The Texas Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) Audit and Inspections Division (OIG Audit) reviewed the conditions of three of Mission Road's four assisted living facilities during on-site visits to determine whether they provided a safe living environment; were sufficiently secured, modified, clean, and maintained in good repair; and had fire and other hazard detection and safety systems in place. On the day of the visits:

- All three facilities were clean, in good condition, and generally free of hazards. However, OIG Audit identified some minor hazards at one of the facilities.
- Fire detection and safety equipment and processes were in place at all three facilities and equipment appeared operable. However, none of the three facilities had installed carbon monoxide detectors in resident bedrooms, as required.
- All three facilities appropriately secured and separated medications by resident and maintained complete records, as required.

Objective

The audit objective was to determine whether Mission Road operated and provided residential DBMD services at its assisted living facilities in compliance with applicable contractual requirements, laws, rules, and guidelines.

Scope

The audit scope covered the conditions during the on-site visit of three assisted living facilities operated by Mission Road on December 8, 2021, and health and safety related documentation through January 2022.

OIG Audit offered recommendations to Mission Road, which, if implemented, will:

- Help identify and mitigate hazards to ensure the safety of residents and staff.
- Ensure that hazard detection systems are in appropriate spaces throughout each facility.

The “Detailed Audit Results” section of this report presents additional information about the audit results.

OIG Audit presented preliminary audit results, issues, and recommendations to Mission Road in a draft report dated April 8, 2022. Mission Road agreed with the audit recommendations and indicated corrective actions were implemented by April 2022. Mission Road’s management responses are included in the report following each recommendation.

OIG Audit appreciates management and staff at Mission Road for their cooperation and assistance during this audit.

Key Program Data

Mission Road, a part of Mission Road Ministries and a DBMD provider contracted with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), is a non-profit organization providing residential care for adults with intellectual and other developmental disabilities in San Antonio, Texas. Mission Road served 23 DBMD participants residing in four assisted living facilities and received a total of \$1.24 million through the DBMD program in 2021.

Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities Program

The DBMD program is a state Medicaid waiver program approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to provide community-based services and supports to eligible individuals as an alternative to institutionalization in intermediate care facilities. An individual’s eligibility for the DBMD program is based on financial means, the diagnosis of deafblindness, and an additional disability that results in the impairment of independent functioning.

Auditing Standards

Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Detailed Audit Results

Mission Road operated and provided residential DBMD services at its assisted living facilities largely in compliance with applicable contractual requirements, laws, rules, and guidelines. Specifically, Mission Road ensured that the facilities generally met requirements related to:

- Ensuring a healthy and safe living environment, free of excess dirt, rubbish, and hazards.
- Placing fire safety and other hazard detection equipment throughout the facility.

Additionally, Mission Road complied with requirements related to:

- Ensuring all three facilities have social-diversional spaces; kitchens equipped to store, refrigerate, prepare, and serve food; air conditioning; appropriate bathing facilities; and bedrooms with furniture.¹
- The storage and administration of medications at all three facilities.² Specifically, all three facilities (a) stored medications in a locked area, with internal-use medications for each resident stored separately from external use-only medications within that area; and (b) maintained complete and accurate medication records with all required information on each resident's medication profile record.

However, Mission Road did not meet all requirements to ensure resident safety. The following sections of this report provide additional detail about the instances of noncompliance identified by OIG Audit. OIG Audit also communicated other, less significant findings to Mission Road separately in writing.

¹ 26 Tex. Admin. Code §§ 553.122 and 553.127 (Aug. 31, 2021).

² 26 Tex. Admin. Code § 553.261 (Aug. 31, 2021).

Chapter 1: While Mission Road Had Fire Safety Systems in Place, It Did Not Ensure Carbon Monoxide Detectors Were Installed in All Required Spaces

All three facilities (a) had fire detection and suppression systems in place, (b) had fire safety plans that had been reviewed annually, (c) conducted at least one quarterly fire drill on each shift with at least one drill each month, and (d) underwent an annual inspection by the appropriate fire marshal.³

In addition to fire safety–related requirements, assisted living facilities serving DBMD participants are required to have carbon monoxide detectors in resident bedrooms.⁴ While all three facilities had carbon monoxide detectors in common spaces, they were not installed in the residents' bedrooms, as management was unaware of this requirement. Due to the vulnerability of the DBMD residents, this increases the risk that dangerous buildups of carbon monoxide in resident bedrooms will go undetected.

Recommendation 1

Mission Road should ensure that carbon monoxide detectors are installed in resident bedrooms.

Management Response

The carbon monoxide detectors at all three facilities were in public spaces rather than resident bedrooms. Prior to the onsite inspection, the issue had not been identified. Mission Road will comply with all Health and Human Service Commission's health and safety requirements. Following the onsite review by the Office of Inspector General, Mission Road purchased carbon monoxide detectors for all residents' bedrooms and installed them.

Action Plan

Carbon Monoxide detectors have been installed in all bedrooms in accordance with state requirements.

³ 26 Tex. Admin. Code §§ 553.104 and 553.125 (Aug. 31, 2021).

⁴ 40 Tex. Admin. Code § 42.630 (Mar. 20, 2016).

Responsible Manager

Director of Facility Maintenance

Implementation Date

February 9, 2022

Chapter 2: Mission Road Facilities Were Clean and in Good Repair, but One Facility Was Not Entirely Free of Hazards

The exterior and interior of all three facilities were in good condition and largely free of rubbish, garbage, and hazards that may constitute a fire or health hazard as required.⁵

However, Mission Road does not have a process designed to identify hazards at its facilities and, as a result, did not identify and mitigate a hazard that increased the risk of injury to Mission Road’s residents and staff. Specifically, one of the facilities had (a) significantly warped boards on its fence, including some that had pulled away from the fence at approximately head height, increasing the risk of injury and (b) a board with an exposed screw leaning against the exterior of the facility next to a walkway.

Recommendation 2

Mission Road should develop and implement a process to identify and mitigate hazards in its facilities.

Management Response

Mission Road has an established system in place for all employees to submit a work order request to the maintenance department for resolution. All property repairs are addressed timely through the online request system. In addition, Mission Road's Safety Committee conducts random onsite inspections of agency property throughout the year.

Action Plan

Mission Road will retrain all staff on identifying health and safety hazards and how to utilize the online work order request system.

Responsible Manager

House Managers and Director

⁵ 26 Tex. Admin. Code §§ 553.103 and 553.104 (Aug. 31, 2021).



Implementation Date

April 22, 2022

Appendix A: Objective, Scope, and Criteria

Objective and Scope

The audit objective was to determine whether Mission Road operated and provided residential DBMD services at its assisted living facilities in compliance with applicable contractual requirements, laws, rules, and guidelines.

The audit scope covered the conditions during the unannounced on-site visits of three assisted living facilities operated by Mission Road on December 8, 2021, and health and safety related documentation through January 2022. The audit included a review of Mission Road's internal control structure as well as testing of controls that were significant within the context of the audit objectives.

Criteria

OIG Audit used the following criteria to evaluate the information provided:

- 26 Tex. Admin. Code, Chapter 553, Subchapters A, D, and E, (2021)
- 40 Tex. Admin. Code § 42.630 (2016)
- Tex. Health & Safety Code § 247.026 (2015)

Appendix B: Background

The DBMD program provides home and community-based services to individuals with deafblindness and another disability as a cost-effective alternative to an intermediate care facility for individuals with an intellectual disability or related conditions.

The DBMD program focuses on increasing opportunities for individuals to communicate and interact with their environment. Services provided are based on the unique needs of the individual and on an individual plan of care developed by the service planning team. The service planning team includes the individual, the case manager, and a representative of the program provider.

DBMD services are available to Texas residents not living in an institutional setting who:

- Have a diagnosis of deafblindness (or a related condition that will result in deafblindness) as well as an additional diagnosis
- Have a related condition that was displayed before age 22
- Meet the level-of-care criteria for placement in an intermediate care facility for individuals with an intellectual disability or related conditions
- Do not exceed specified income and resource limits
- Are not enrolled in any other Medicaid waiver program
- Demonstrate need for one or more services on a monthly basis

Individuals must also exhibit substantial functional limitation in at least three of the following areas of major life activities:

- Learning
- Mobility
- Self-care
- Language
- Self-direction (age 10 and over)
- Independent Living (age 10 and over)

Individuals must be eligible for or be receiving Supplemental Security Income or Medicaid. Financial eligibility is determined by the Social Security Administration or by Texas HHSC using Social Security Income–related criteria.

Appendix C: Detailed Methodology

OIG Audit reviewed the conditions of three assisted living facilities during unannounced on-site visits to determine whether they provided a safe living environment; were sufficiently secured, modified, clean, and maintained in good repair; and had fire and other hazard detection and safety systems in place. Specifically, auditors physically observed whether certain requirements were met related to:

- Exterior and interior conditions and cleanliness
- Fire safety
- Information postings
- Medication administration

OIG Audit also reviewed Mission Road's system of internal controls, including components of internal control,⁶ within the context of the audit objectives.

Auditors did not use a sampling methodology for testing; therefore, the results of testing should not be projected to the population of assisted living facilities.

⁶ For more information on the components of internal control, see the United States Government Accountability Office's *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, (Sept. 2014), <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-14-704g.pdf> (accessed Apr. 16, 2021).

Appendix D: Report Team and Distribution

Report Team

OIG staff members who contributed to this audit report include:

- Kacy J. VerColen, CPA, Deputy Inspector General of Audit and Inspections
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Mission Road Developmental Center

- Lora Butler, President
- Caroline Watkins, Director of Regulatory and Quality Assurance
- Elisa Gonzalez, Director of Community Operations
- Melissa Almazon, Director, Deaf/Blind Program
- David Rowley, Director of Facility Maintenance

Appendix E: OIG Mission, Leadership, and Contact Information

The mission of OIG is to prevent, detect, and deter fraud, waste, and abuse through the audit, investigation, and inspection of federal and state taxpayer dollars used in the provision and delivery of health and human services in Texas. The senior leadership guiding the fulfillment of OIG's mission and statutory responsibility includes:

- Sylvia Hernandez Kauffman, Inspector General
- Audrey O'Neill, Principal Deputy Inspector General, Chief of Audit and Inspections
- Susan Biles, Chief of Staff, Chief of Policy and Performance
- Erik Cary, Interim Chief Counsel
- Christine Maldonado, Chief of Operations and Workforce Leadership
- Steve Johnson, Chief of Investigations and Reviews

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