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DHS moves residents, initiates investigation of Connell House

On Friday the Oregon Department of Human Services moved the five residents from the Luke-Dorf Secure Residential Treatment Center in Cornelius, also known as the Connell House, in order to launch an investigation into the facility.

The action was taken because even under the heightened scrutiny the facility has received during the past several months a client walked away last Thursday and was found later at a nearby AM/PM convenience store.

The client was living at Connell House after being civilly committed through Washington County. He was not a threat to himself or others and was not at Connell House because he had committed a crime. However, the latest incident combined with prior allegations at the facility led DHS to take the action of moving the residents for their own safety and launching the investigation.

At the time of the action five additional residents were living at the facility. Four were people who were under the jurisdiction of the Psychiatric Security Review Board as forensic clients and they have been returned to the Oregon State Hospital until a more appropriate community setting can be found. The fifth client has been moved to another treatment facility. The client who walked away has been hospitalized in Portland.

Over the past few months the state and Washington County mental health officials have been working very closely with Luke-Dorf to resolve earlier concerns raised by law enforcement.

"The standards for running a secure residential treatment facility are very high," said Len Ray, administrator for adult mental health services in the DHS Addictions

and Mental Health Division. "We are taking such decisive actions now because it is clear there are unresolved issues with this treatment provider."

The investigation will last as long as it takes to ensure the residents are receiving adequate and safe treatment at the Connell House and that the home meets the standards for a secure facility. At that point DHS will determine further action up to and including revoking Luke-Dorf's license to operate this facility.

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