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## **Oregon Department of Human Services Acts to Ensure Safety for Out-of-State Foster Children and Youth**

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(SALEM, OR) – The Oregon Department of Human Services today (April 11, 2019) announced several steps to ensure the safety of children and youth in out-of-state facilities and begin the process of bringing them back to Oregon.

The actions include halting any Oregon youth from being placed at care facilities operated by Acadia, a for-profit provider that operates a Montana facility where concerns were recently raised about care for Oregon children, including injecting children with Benadryl.

Actions specific to Acadia facilities include:

- Department staff traveled today to review Oregon youth and children placements at the Acadia facility in Butte, Montana.
- The Department sent a cease-and-desist letter April 4 to Acadia telling the facility to halt any injections of medicine, which are not permitted at similar foster youth facilities in Oregon. The facility immediately complied.
- Oregon on April 3 stopped any Oregon youth from being placed at any Acadia facilities nationwide.

In addition, DHS is taking a variety of steps to ensure the safety of the more than 80 Oregon youth are currently placed in out-of-state facilities. Actions include:

- The Department is doing a comprehensive review of independent third-party contractors, such as mental health professionals, who Oregon hires to monitor foster youth and children in other states. Contractors are required to visit children every 30 days, similar to how Oregon caseworkers check on youth in state.
- The Department's Office of Developmental Disabilities is working on finding appropriate placements in Oregon for seven youth with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities who are currently placed out of state.

- The Department launched a [Website](#) about out-of-state placements that will be updated regularly and include the names of facilities, locations, accreditation agencies, number of children, ages, and daily payment rates.
- The Department on Thursday launched a 60-day planning process to review all out-of-state placements, convene Oregon care providers to find ways to build more specialized care in the state, and focus on the goal of returning all out-of-state foster youth.

“We are working hard every day to make sure they are safe, make sure Oregon staff or third-party contractors check on them, and review how they are being treated,” Jones said.

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