

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

CITY OF BALTIMORE



Isabel Mercedes Cumming
Inspector General

Investigative Report Synopsis

OIG Case # 22-0052-I
Issued: September 20, 2022



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
Isabel Mercedes Cumming, Inspector General
City Hall, Suite 635
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202



September 20, 2022

Dear Citizens of Baltimore City,

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) issued a prior Public Synopsis (PS #21-0032-I) detailing unsanitary work conditions and maintenance issues observed during a December 2020 site visit at the Baltimore City Health Department's (BCHD) Druid Sexual Health Clinic (Druid SHC).¹ The OIG received an anonymous complaint in May 2022, alleging the conditions at the Druid SHC have not improved, and it is still an unsafe environment for patients.

This Public Synopsis provides information the Office of Inspector General (OIG) learned when conducting a follow-up site visit to the Druid SHC on July 14, 2022.

Background

The OIG's prior PS #21-0032-I documented evidence of rodents, pests, malfunctioning doors, temperature control issues, and other general maintenance issues at the Druid SHC facility (Exhibit 1). The OIG made those observations during a December 2020 site visit and raised concerns regarding BCHD's compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations and employee health and safety requirements under the City of Baltimore's (City) Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with its labor unions. The OIG issued PS #21-0032-I and BCHD's response in September 2021 (Exhibit 2).

Rodent and Pest Concerns

During the follow-up visit on July 14, 2022, the OIG reviewed the Druid SHC basement area. In addition to being the location of the staff break room, the Druid SHC basement is where numerous BCHD supplies are stored. The OIG found a rodent in the basement that appears to be the same deceased rodent observed in the same spot during the December 2020 visit (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Deceased rodent in basement in December 2020 (left) and potentially the same rodent in July 2022 (right)



¹ Druid SHC is located at 1515 W. North Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21217. The Druid SHC provides testing, diagnosis, and treatment for sexually transmitted infections. BCHD's Dental and Family Planning also operate in the building.

REPORT FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE

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This public synopsis is only a summary of a more comprehensive report of investigation submitted to the appropriate City management official

Additionally, the OIG located potential rodent droppings in a hallway (Figure 2) and insects throughout the Druid SHC facility (Figure 3).

Figure 2: Potential Rodent Droppings

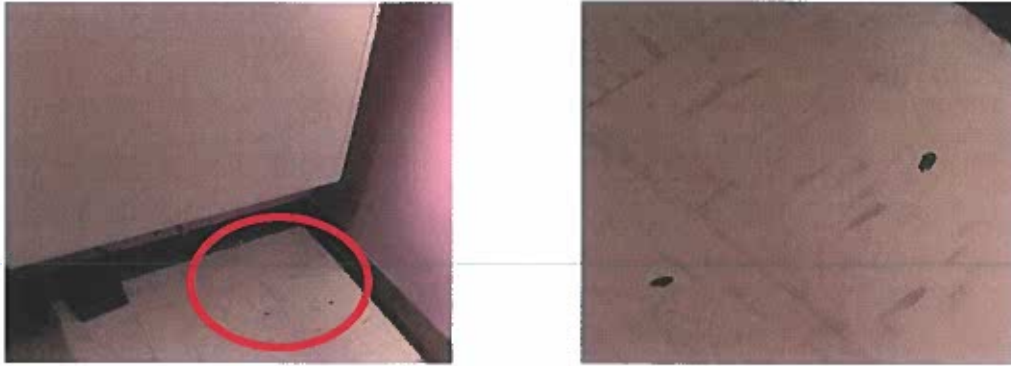


Figure 3: Insects in Druid SHC lobby area, stairwell, and staff break room



Potential Security Concerns

The OIG reviewed multiple entry points that appeared to be unsecured, potentially leaving the Druid SHC vulnerable to theft and creating safety concerns for staff. The OIG also observed security cameras in the interior and exterior of the Druid SHC. However, the OIG learned that the digital video recorder (DVR) for the Druid SHC building's cameras was not operational.

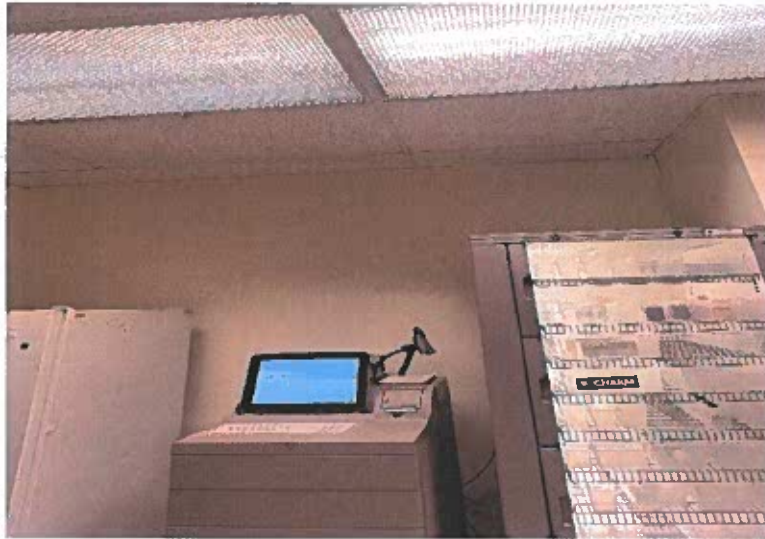
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The OIG reviewed the room where the Druid SHC’s Pyxis, an automated medication dispensing system, is stored. The OIG previously noted inventory concerns involving the Pyxis system in the public synopsis for case #20-0021-I (Exhibit 3). In BCHD’s response to the report, BCHD stated they would work to install security cameras to address discrepancies (Exhibit 4). During the July 2022 site visit, the OIG did not observe any cameras in the Pyxis room (Figure 7).

Figure 4: Pyxis room (Photo from July 2022)



General Maintenance Concerns

The OIG noted maintenance concerns in the women’s restroom, an electric panel room containing numerous cardboard boxes, and damaged ceiling tiles (Figures 8-10).²

Figure 5: Maintenance issues in woman’s bathroom



² The numerous cardboard boxes near the electric panel may be a potential violation of the City’s fire code.

Figure 6: Electrical panel room containing numerous cardboard boxes



Figure 7: Damaged ceiling tiles



Druid SHC Improvements

In PS #21-0032-I, the OIG previously identified concerns regarding the building's dumpster creating a rodent infestation due to being frequently overfilled. During the OIG's July 2022 site visit, the OIG found a fence had been installed surrounding the dumpster access area and noticed the dumpster was not over-capacity (Figure 11).

Figure 8: Fence installed around parking lot dumpster (July 2022)



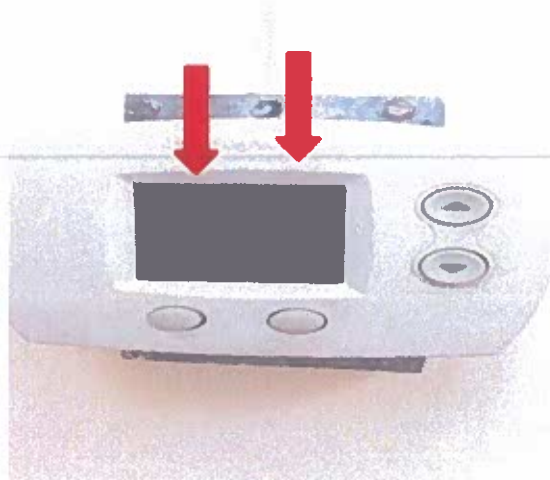
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During the investigation for PS #21-0032-I, the OIG received multiple reports of Heating, Ventilation, and Air-Conditioning (HVAC) issues. The OIG determined that these HVAC issues created a lack of temperature control, disrupting rapid testing for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Hepatitis C Virus (HCV). In December 2020, the OIG noted a set temperature of 69° on the Druid SHC thermostat, but the temperature was 78°. At the time of the July 2022 visit, the Druid SHC HVAC system appeared to be functioning correctly as the thermostat and room temperature were both 70° (Figure 12).

Figure 9: Thermostat (July 2022)



Additionally, the unsecured and damaged access door documented in Report #21-0032-I has since been repaired and is secured (Figure 13).

Figure 10: Access door repaired and secured (July 2022)



OSHA Visit

The OIG learned of an unannounced visit from Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) at the Druid SHC on June 3, 2022. The OIG reviewed BCHD correspondence regarding several issues raised during the OSHA inspection, including the lack of ready access to safety needles, a written exposure plan, and sharps containers not being mounted to the wall.

REPORT FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE

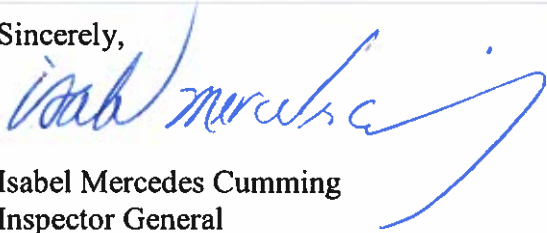
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Investigative Findings

The OIG substantiated the complaint allegations in part. The OIG's observations of rodents, pests, security, and other general maintenance during the July 2022 site visit support that there are still concerns regarding BCHD's compliance with OSHA regulations and employee health and safety requirements per the City's MOUs with labor unions. However, it is worth noting several improvements have occurred at the Druid SHC since the prior OIG investigation. The Druid SHC's thermostat appeared to regulate the temperature within the work environment properly, and a new fence seems to have curtailed the overflowing trash in the facility's dumpster.

Sincerely,



Isabel Mercedes Cumming
Inspector General

CC: Hon. Brandon M. Scott, Mayor of Baltimore City
Hon. Nick Mosby, Baltimore City Council President
Hon. Bill Henry, Baltimore City Comptroller
Honorable Members of the Baltimore City Council
Hon. Jim Shea, Baltimore City Solicitor

Exhibits

1. Public Synopsis #21-0032-I
2. BCHD response to Report #21-0032-I
3. Excerpts from Public Synopsis #20-0021-I
4. BCHD Response to OIG report #20-0021-I