

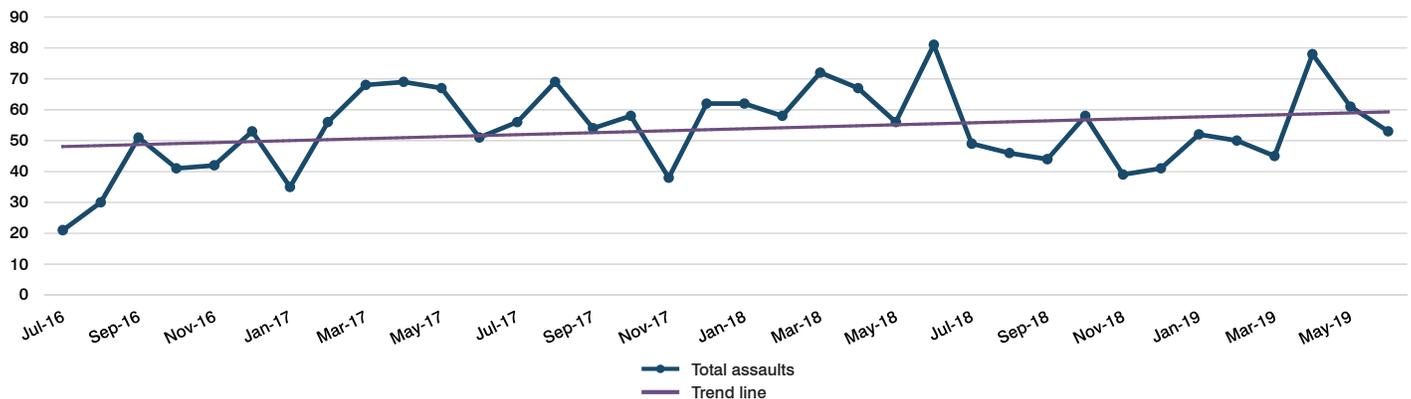
## Arizona Department of Health Services Arizona State Hospital

**CONCLUSION:** The Arizona State Hospital (State Hospital), a division of the Arizona Department of Health Services (Department), provides long-term inpatient psychiatric treatment to persons with mental illnesses. Although the State Hospital has implemented multiple strategies for responding to and reducing patient assaults, it has not fully assessed the effectiveness of these strategies. The State Hospital has also established an application process, supported by policies and procedures, to guide admissions to its Civil Hospital, which is for patients who typically have not responded to treatment in the community and who are court-ordered to receive treatment. Further, the State Hospital has various processes for ensuring patients receive their prescribed treatment and has implemented all but 1 recommendation from a November 2015 independent investigation of its incident reporting and investigation processes.

### State Hospital has not fully assessed the effectiveness of its assault response and reduction strategies

The State Hospital is responsible for caring for patients with mental illnesses, some of whom may have a predisposition for assaultive or other violent behaviors. The number of physical assaults at the State Hospital has fluctuated from month to month from July 2016 through June 2019, with the trend of monthly assaults slightly increasing since July 2016.

**Total physical assaults  
 July 2016 through June 2019**



The State Hospital has implemented multiple strategies that, if successful, could help the State Hospital respond to or reduce patient violence. For example, the State Hospital provides structured patient activities in patients' living quarters and escorts patients around campus facilities, which can help keep patient agitation levels low and/or minimize crowding of patients. However, the State Hospital has not fully evaluated the extent to which its strategies are achieving their respective desired outcomes, such as keeping patient agitation levels low. Because the State Hospital lacks a structured approach to evaluate its strategies, it may be missing opportunities to more effectively respond to and reduce assaults.

### Recommendation

The State Hospital should develop, implement, and document a structured approach for evaluating its assault response and reduction strategies to support the safest possible environment for patients and staff, including:

- Assessing and determining whether the selected strategy achieved its desired outcomes.
- Using evaluation results to identify ways to improve the strategy.

## State Hospital has an application process to admit patients into Civil Hospital

**Patients admitted to Civil Hospital based on various factors**—The State Hospital admits individuals into its Civil Hospital through an application process and considers admission based on various factors, such as an individual’s ability to benefit from treatment at the State Hospital, whether the individual is under a court order for treatment, whether the individual has received at least 25 days of court-ordered treatment in a local mental health treatment agency as required by statute, and the availability of suitable aftercare placement. According to the State Hospital, mandatory local treatment helps ensure patients receive treatment in the least restrictive alternative available. Additionally, the State Hospital explained that it considers the availability of suitable aftercare placement during the application process because a lack of suitable aftercare placement options may lead to unnecessary extended stays for some patients. During the audit, the State Hospital began revising its admissions policy to clarify the types of medical conditions that the State Hospital is able and equipped to treat and to establish a process for a referring agency to request a conference with the State Hospital’s Chief Medical Officer to ask for a reconsideration of admission if an application is denied.

**Civil Hospital admissions we reviewed took an average of 24 days**—Based on our review of the 13 applications accepted by the State Hospital between December 2018 and April 2019, we found that it took an average of 24 days from the time the application was received by the State Hospital until the day the patient was admitted to the facility. We did not identify any statutory, rule, or accreditation requirements establishing time frames for the admission process.

## State Hospital has established processes to ensure patients receive prescribed treatment

The State Hospital has various processes based on requirements in rule, accreditation standards, and internal policies to help ensure patients’ treatment is offered as prescribed and is adequate. These include creating and reviewing individualized treatment plans, performing annual patient assessments, and documenting patient treatment encounters in progress notes. We randomly selected treatment plan reviews for 12 patients that occurred between July 2018 and March 2019 and found that all 12 patients received their treatment plan reviews at the frequency required by rule, 9 of the 12 patients attended their reviews, and treatment team members documented why the other 3 patients did not attend their reviews. For these 3 cases, an appointed guardian attended the treatment plan review. Additionally, we reviewed these patients’ psychiatry, nursing, social work, and rehabilitation annual assessments and found that all 12 patients had received all their annual assessments from January 2016 through November 2018. Finally, we reviewed a total of 31 treatment plan interventions for the 12 patients and found that 24 of the interventions included progress notes that identified interventions had been performed or offered. For the remaining 7 interventions, it was unclear whether an intervention had been performed or offered as specifically written in the treatment plan. The State Hospital found similar examples in internal audits and reported that staff supervisors have begun reviewing patient treatment plans to ensure interventions are worded appropriately.

## State Hospital has implemented 5 of 6 recommendations from 2015 independent investigation

In November 2015, former Arizona Supreme Court Justice Ruth McGregor published a report (McGregor report) on her independent investigation of assault and sexual assault allegations at the State Hospital. The McGregor report included 6 recommendations for the State Hospital to improve its processes for reporting and investigating incidents. The State Hospital has implemented, or implemented in a different manner, 5 of the 6 McGregor report recommendations. For example, we found that it had established a method to follow incidents from beginning to conclusion. Specifically, we reviewed 27 incidents and were able to follow each incident, including investigative steps taken, decisions reached, and corrective actions recommended or taken as part of the investigation. We also found that the State Hospital had improved its training for preparing incident reports. The State Hospital did not implement a recommendation that the State Hospital narrow the types of incidents reported in its incident reporting form or to create a different form for “administrative” matters. State Hospital management reported that they decided to continue their practice of reporting all incidents because they believe every incident could contribute to a safety hazard for both patients and staff.