

Dauphin County Prison Board Special Advisor John Wetzel's 90-Day Progress Report

For Public Release on Feb. 17, 2022

I. IMPROVE POLICY, PROCEDURES/INCREASE TRANSPARENCY

Use of Force: Policy has been revised, strengthened, and implemented. Training of all staff, with assistance from Pa. Department of Corrections, is expected to be completed by end of March 2022.

Inmate Transport: Improved oversight of inmate transports. Senior officers perform routine inspections to affirm compliance. Officers are selected for these duties based on performance/experience. Previously, transport teams were via "sign-up" format.

Family Notification: Enhanced policy that requires immediate notification to an inmate's next of kin in event of death or admittance to a medical facility. This is part of an overall effort to keep inmates' loved ones informed. Additionally, the prison website was revised to improve accessibility for family members. Also, Warden Briggs will be available for monthly meetings with relatives of inmates. Finally, a part-time **medical advocate** will be directly available to relatives of inmates with questions or concerns about their loved ones.

Inmate Quality of Life: Review of food service contract to improve food quality. Barber contract also under review. Staffing analysis (referenced below) will allow inmates more time out of cells. Televisions are available in all blocks and day rooms; yard recess is expected to be reinstated in March 2022

Community Advisory Committee Engagement: Committee members will tour the prison and will have regular interaction and discussions with inmates.

II. PROVIDE STAFF WITH TOOLS TO SUCCEED

Training: Corrections staff must be aware of and understand all policies and procedures to ensure their own safety as well as the safety of staff, inmates, and visitors. This understanding makes for a more efficient and effective team. Among the deployed training upgrades:

Use of Force (referenced above)

De-escalation: For the first time, there will be comprehensive de-escalation training at Dauphin County Prison. Working with Dr. Christian Conte, a nationally renowned anger management and de-escalation expert. Dr. Conte would conduct a battery of training sessions, enabling prison staff to conduct future trainings internally.

Critical Incident Stress Management Team: Ten certified staff members work rotations to be available to officers/staff who need to decompress.

Comprehensive Staffing Analysis: Led by Rod Miller, a national jail-staffing expert, a comprehensive analysis is underway to review all aspects of staffing and scheduling. The purpose is to deploy staff more efficiently and increase inmates' time out of cells.

Staff Organization Chart Improvements: Increased managerial presence will provide better oversight of staff and inmates and improved span of control. Increased staff accountability is the goal. This initiative is also expected to decrease overtime shifts, promoting staff wellness.

Staff Wellness Committee: The committee has been assembled with a purpose to assess overall staff wellness, gauge morale, and respond accordingly.

Staff Recruitment: A job fair is tentatively scheduled for March 2022. Bolstering staff will increase staff wellness and morale.

III. ENSURE SECURE, SAFE FACILITY

Anti-Contraband Efforts: Keeping contraband out of the prison is a top priority. We are aware that smuggling practices are fluid and will change to avoid detection tactics employed by correctional facilities across the country. Among the initiatives deployed at Dauphin County Prison:

Mail sort procedures: Nationally and locally, narcotics and illegal substances are smuggled via mail. Inmates do not receive hard copies of mail. Mail is scanned to e-tablets for inmate viewing.

Clear lunch bags: All staff are required to use issued transparent bags.

Systems/Fixtures Upgrades: Efforts are ongoing to make improvements to the physical structure and systems, as budget and safety requirements permit. Among the improvements already implemented were a replacement of HVAC (cost of approximately \$4 million), and lighting adjustments.