

January 21, 2025

Testimony for Correctional Advisory Committee – Public Hearing
Joint Commission on Judiciary
Legislative Office Building, Room 2500
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Proposed Testimony for Correctional Advisory Committee

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I write this testimony as the parent of a young woman currently incarcerated at York Correctional Institution. The below are my concerns, as well as my daughters:

1. When inmates want to review legal materials in the library, they are only permitted ten minutes on site. Reference materials cannot be signed out, making it impossible to assist in their own defense or appeals.
2. When inmates try to review a legal document provided by the facility on their tablets, their tablet immediately goes down, requiring a restart – every time.
3. Website is rarely updated by staff during lockdowns, often resulting in families traveling great distances, only to be turned away at the facility.
4. East Lyme 2023 Water Report is at maximum acceptable levels with the exception of trihalomethanes for which the acceptable range is 12.7 through 28.10. East Lyme's level is 29.25, but the report indicates that this is not a violation (?!). Inmates are exposed to TTHM in drinking water from ingestion (i.e., drinking the water and ingesting it in foods and/or ice prepared with the water). In addition, TTHM vaporizes readily into the air so inhalation exposure to TTHM can be significant, especially when showering and bathing, as can exposure from absorption through the skin. This is what my child is required to drink and bathe in, while correction officers know better than to drink it, and bring gallons of water to drink in front of them.
5. Inmates cannot purchase dish detergent as it is not for sale through commissary. They wash their dishes with Elementz, a shampoo which contains a known carcinogen, cocamide dea. This has been banned in certain states as it causes infertility.
6. Fat squirrels are visible running in and out of the vents to the kitchen, eating the food therein and, assumedly, leaving feces in the food preparation area. This can be seen from inmate windows.

7. My daughter, a wheelchair user, needs surgery to remove a screw from her foot which she had placed after the motor vehicle accident which is the reason for her incarceration. She was advised by a physician at York not to pursue this surgery as she would be returning to a non-sterile environment at the medical unit of York. She also requires a skin graft revision surgery as nerves in her arm where she had a graft are poking through the skin causing great pain and discomfort. She has not pursued this treatment either, due to her fears regarding the cleanliness and safety of the medical unit at York where she would be recovering.

8. Mental health calls result in inmates being placed in a turtle suit at the 4 North unit, solely because they cried. There is lack of grief support when relatives of inmates die and they are afraid to cry for fear of being placed in restraints.

9. Generic, often unsuitable, medications are substituted for the medications inmates are taking upon intake. In my daughter's case, her medication is often not sent by the pharmacy, resulting in her not receiving it.

10. My daughter's A1C was 6.5 and she began receiving a GLP-1 drug as this constitutes Type 2 diabetes. It is now time to titrate to a higher dose, as her A1C is now 6.2 (still T2D), but she was told by an APRN that 6.2 is a fantastic A1C for an incarcerated individual. This inequitable medical treatment of inmates is outrageous. High A1C levels cause a myriad of other health conditions which fact is ignored by York medical staff.

11. Staff is not rotated on the units properly, resulting in the same guards being assigned to the same units and showing favoritism to their "preferred" inmates. This is not in accordance with what we believe to be standard operating procedure.

12. Social work correctional groups only occur during the day, while my daughter attends school. The result of this is that she receives none of these services.

13. Untrained staff with no Microsoft Teams training are stationed in the visiting room resulting in the failure of previously scheduled video visits not occurring. Rather than trouble shoot, inmates are sent back to their unit. I personally witnessed a woman whose mother was in Brazil having difficulty connecting via Teams and rather than assisting, the inmate was sent back to her unit.

14. Certain staff at the public lobby office have boisterous, vulgar conversations which can be heard by the public, including children. I find this unacceptable and not in conformance with the many "ethics" and "professionalism" posters in the lobby.

15. Certain staff on third shift are intentionally loud, waking the inmates and having the negative result of fatigue on the entire unit the following day.

16. Many lockdowns have occurred due to staff errors, not caused by inmates. For example, a spoon was missing in the kitchen and was later found in a cabinet where it didn't belong (after a lockdown). A set of handcuffs was missing (lost by staff member) and all of the girls were required to strip and bend over naked to have their genitals and anuses inspected. A lockdown also occurred for that incident.

17. Medical marijuana is not available to inmates, even if it has been prescribed for them prior to incarceration.

18. My daughter was supposed to have physical therapy – although there is a gym at York, the teacher won't permit it to be used for this purpose. No physical therapy has occurred. My daughter has rods, pins and screws holding her legs, ankles and feet together due to her motor vehicle accident. She has used a wheelchair since going to York. The lack of therapy has substantially set her back in her recovery.

19. The ADA coordinator is impossible to reach, resulting in unacceptable delays for requested accommodations.

20. Garbage cans in cells were removed (possibly it was thought that they could be used as a weapon). Inmates are required to keep their garbage on the floors of their cells until it is collected. Mice are rampant in the units. Sticky traps are provided which, when a mouse is caught, the inmates often have to spend the night listening to it flip around in agony. For inmates with PTSD such as my daughter, this is horrifying. Inmates are also required to dispose of the mouse when garbage is collected.

21. Certain items are only available through Commissary during the holiday season. I fail to see what rehabilitative effect denying an inmate Nutella can possibly have.

I thank the Committee for the opportunity to provide this information. Your kind attention to these matters is greatly appreciated.

Very truly yours,



Tracey Sheedy

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