

Board of Visitors

Annual Report

Franklin County Detention Center
Farmington, Maine
March 2024 (Report for Year 2023)



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Introduction

Franklin County Jail Board of Visitors is an oversight and advisory committee of citizens identified by the Sheriff to represent the interests of the people in Franklin County. It is mandated by law (Chapter 13, Title 30-A, 1607). The Board of Visitors (BOV) are chosen for their varied orientations, interests and expertise in the field of corrections and rehabilitation issues. The BOV focus in this capacity will be regarding public safety and security, jail staff safety, as well as inmate health and safety.

-from FCDC Policies and Procedures Manual 10/17

As noted by the MDOC, the mission of corrections is to reduce recidivism while holding the offender accountable. The ultimate goal is to rehabilitate, ensuring that the inmate is able to maintain themselves upon release as part of the outside community. Priority must be given to inmate and staff safety in order to accomplish these goals.

“The goal of the Franklin County Detention Center is to provide a safe, sanitary and secure place of detention for all persons committed to this jurisdiction for detention or correction.”

-from the 2020 [Inmate Handbook, Rules and Regulations](#)

In looking at the words “detention” or “correction” it is important to consider the humane and respectful treatment of all inmates as core values. Basic needs and services consistent with a physically and emotionally healthy environment should be considered essential during their tenure at the Center. Beyond the standard custodial “clean and safe” considerations, we suggest that there are deeper needs to embrace that contribute to the fulfillment of the mission of the FCDC. The concept of “punishment” should not go beyond what the courts have delivered as a sentencing condition.

The Board of Visitors Annual Report for 2022 can be found [here](#) and the Annual Report for 2021 can be found [here](#).

Statement from the Board of Visitors

Each year, the Board of Visitors is tasked with writing a comprehensive report on the status of the county detention center. During the year, we strive to learn what practices, procedures and methods are used at the facility to meet the goals of providing a safe, sanitary, and secure location for our residents. We also try to educate ourselves on new methods, new laws, and the culture of incarceration in Maine and the United States. We want to provide the best services for our residents with the resources available.

Along with our investigatory and research duties, we also strive to provide recommendations and suggestions when there are improvements to be made. Part of this year's report will be reviewing the recommendations from last year's report and providing an update on the status of the recommendation, if applicable.

As a Board, we remain committed to maintaining and improving our current facility and continuing to provide comprehensive services for all of the facility's residents through rehabilitation, including education, expanded mental health treatment, access to medical care and peer recovery, treatment for substance use disorder, re-entry services, and adequate training and education for FCDC staff.

Recruitment and Retention of Staff

A correctional officer is responsible for the supervision, safety, and security of persons in the custody of the Franklin County Jail. The position requires a great deal of knowledge, training, physical activity, compassion, and the ability to relate to people from all walks of life. There is a value to having experienced and well-trained correctional officers providing stability in the correctional facility.

Recruitment and retention of staff at the Franklin County Detention Center (FCDC) is very challenging. Stress and working conditions contribute to this issue. At the time of last year's report, the jail was short staffed by three positions. Fortunately, this year the jail is fully staffed. There are 14 correctional officers, one transport officer, and one utility officer. The sergeants are on the floor during shifts and are included in the number of correctional officers.

However, jail staff and officials still report that the current staffing is still not enough to adequately meet the needs of the jail. The demands of FCDC operations mean that staff are always multi-tasking, and the jail often remains short-staffed on days where inmates have to attend court (which is Monday, Wednesday, and Friday) or when staff members are out for illness, personal reasons, or training. The utility officer can act as a "floater" and fill in on some days, but this does not fully alleviate the pressure on staff. There is also a high turnover rate, and it is anecdotally reported that clashing personalities and interpersonal communications contribute to the stress of the job and the high turnover.

In last year's report, we made several recommendations pertaining to recruitment, including active partnering with schools that offer criminal justice programs, participation in job fairs, and advertising. We also made several recommendations pertaining to retention, including offering competitive salaries and benefits, increased targeted education and training. This year, we are pleased that the jail has been able to fully staff its existing positions. However, because it does not seem to have significantly addressed the staffing issues, we provide additional recommendations below.

Recommendations:

- Add at least one additional correctional officer to all shifts. This would significantly improve staffing constraints on the frequent occasions when an officer is occupied at court or otherwise unavailable. This would reduce burnout among existing staff and also enable the jail to provide additional opportunities to its inmates that it does not currently have the resources for.

- Address staffing turnover by training some staff members in Interpersonal Communications in the Correctional Setting, or “IPC”. There is a five-week program to become an instructor, and the instructor(s) could train FCDC staff annually.
- Provide additional, regular, and ongoing hands-on training pertaining to de-escalation and human behavior.
- Provide education regarding the dangers of burnout, recognizing signs and symptoms of burnout, and secondary trauma.
- Implement a peer support program.
- Encourage regular visits by the Board of Visitors, County Commissioners, or other decision-makers to meet with Corrections Officers and Administration.

Infrastructure

This section was developed from facility tours, BOV member observations, and updates provided by Sheriff Scott Nichols and Major Douglas Blauvelt. It is widely recognized that incarcerated persons are entitled to a standard of living that is consistent with an environment that promotes and supports a culture of rehabilitation and correction. Franklin County Detention Center is the largest county investment. The facility is now over 40 years old and as busy as ever. Advances in technology and efficiency, as well as changes in requirements and resources, strain the physical space of our facility.

Much has been accomplished using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Federal Stimulus Package funds, rather than County taxpayer funds, to mitigate the following problems, which were identified in last year's BOV report:

<u>Project:</u>	<u>Status:</u>
The septic tank and leach field were replaced in 2022 with ARPA funds and continues to be much improved. There have been issues with the design of the system that need to be addressed.	COMPLETE with reservations
The fuel pump area previously experienced flooding during rain/snow melting events and was redesigned and repaired. The system continues to work effectively.	COMPLETE
Minuteman Security and Life Safety has completed the control room switching panel upgrade. Most door lock systems have been replaced. Supply chain issues have caused delays in full project completion.	ONGOING PROJECT, NEARING COMPLETION
The previously exposed wiring from the old control room switch panel has been replaced and is no longer exposed.	COMPLETE
A new medical wing was approved by County Commissioners and intended to be added in 2023. The project is delayed along with the expansion project. Project has yet to go out for bid.	DELAYED
Grease traps in the kitchen are corroded, prevent effective drainage, and can be problematic for the newly replaced septic tank/leach field. This is a substantial project requiring full replacement. It is	PROBLEM IDENTIFIED; REQUIRES FUNDING

recommended this project be included in next year's budget.	RECOMMENDED AS PRIORITY EXPENDITURE
A hybrid transport vehicle was purchased. This vehicle has gains of approximately 20% fuel efficiency.	COMPLETE
The backup generator has been approved for replacement. The jail is experiencing contractor delays. When installed, the new generator will be located outside the physical space of the jail, reducing fume buildup inside the building. The former location will be used to house extra oil tanks for facility heat and require less frequent fuel and sometimes, emergency deliveries.	PENDING

The ongoing expansion project for the jail has been delayed and has not yet gone out to bid. The expansion was designed in negotiation with the County Commissioners. The jail's goals for the expansion had to initially be scaled back quite significantly to adjust to the approved budget. The staff has expressed some frustration at the delay of the project because the renovations are very much needed.

The room in the jail that is directly to the right of the public entrance has historically been used as the courtroom, Maine Pretrial Services office, an office for the DHHS Intensive Case Manager, and sometimes for mental health services. This has been a concern because the room does not offer privacy for these services, which should be kept confidential. Ideally, there would be adequate, separate spaces for these purposes, which would offer complete privacy to the individuals in the rooms and provide a sound barrier between rooms. The expansion offers a more functional solution but will not fully address these concerns. With the expansion, this room will be separated by a wall divider to provide a separate office space for the Intensive Case Manager, a separate space for Maine Pretrial Services, and individual spaces that can be used for mental health services. These spaces will be very small because the size of the room itself will not be expanded. A concern about confidentiality remains, because it is not clear whether the room divider will offer a sound barrier between the spaces. Additionally, because this space is one room that will be divided up, there will still be only one door available to enter the space, which means that people will need to cross through the front spaces to access the back spaces.

The ICM and Maine Pretrial Services provide critical services for the residents of the jail. They should have adequate space, and be allotted adequate hours, to fully address the needs of the residents.

The expansion also includes a dedicated conference room located in a separate administrative building; it will not be inside the jail, which means that it will not be available for inmate use.

The jail's records are presently stored as paper files. It has been the recommendation of BOV to consider electronic storage of records. Area law enforcement, including FCDC, and first responder agencies are in the process of developing a replacement for their outdated Information Management Corporation ("IMC") Computer system. IMC's jail module has needed upgrades for a very long time. The new system is expected to be implemented county-wide in 2025. This should provide a better system for record-keeping.

Recommendations:

Building and Grounds:

- In last year's report, the BOV made recommendations pertaining to the recreational spaces and equipment. These recommendations have not been enacted, and remain important recommendations from the BOV:
 - The recreation area is cleared with a snowblower during the winter, but the addition of an overhead canopy above the outdoor recreation area would better allow inmates to recreate outside during adverse weather.
 - The jail currently does not have adequate indoor recreation equipment for residents to utilize during inclement weather.
- Presently, there is no space or adequate staffing to safely facilitate contact visits, which are otherwise required by Statute and Detention and Correctional Standards for Maine. A visitation area that would accommodate contact visits by children and families of minimum and medium custody residents as provided for by state regulations would help maintain the community relationships that facilitate re-entry and ease the trauma and anxiety experienced by children with incarcerated parents. See further discussion of this in the "Visitation" section below.
- The replacement of the grease trap system needs to be addressed and put in the FY24-FY25 budget.
- Although the expansion will help alleviate some of the concerns for the ICM and Pretrial Services, FCDC should continue to explore and investigate ways to improve access for these services.

- Healthcare providers and legal counsel should always be permitted to meet in an open space with their client, without a barrier between them. FCDC should communicate with providers if there are desired times (or undesired times) for the provider to meet with the client. FCDC should allow providers to meet with the resident for as long as necessary, rather than imposing time limits based on staffing issues or other factors.

Record Keeping:

- Utilize the new record-keeping system to convert prior paper-records to electronic records. Electronic storage would free up physical storage space at the jail, and allow a safer, more convenient, and reliable method of storing important records.

Inmate Access (Communication, Visitation and Computer Access)

Phone

In last year's BOV report, some issues were discussed regarding the security of phone calls for inmates to their attorneys, which was a problem with the agency contracted to provide phone services, Securus Technologies. Most other Maine county jails have also contracted Securus Technologies for phone services. It appears that these concerns have been addressed and are no longer an issue, but the issue should not be forgotten and should always be monitored to ensure that it does not re-occur.

Last year's report also made recommendations regarding the cost of phone services for the inmates. Each county negotiates its own contract costs with Securus. FCDC is compliant with State law regarding the cost of phone services to the inmates, but the cost remains significantly higher than public costs.

Recommendations:

- Costs of phone access should be reviewed regularly to evaluate the impact on families and re-entry, because high costs can serve as a barrier to an inmate's ability to communicate outside of the jail.

Computer Access

Computer access is additionally discussed in the Education section below. Previously, the BOV recommended that computer access be expanded to include the ability for inmates to review the evidence for their case (which is called "Discovery") and other materials they may receive from their attorney. There are often video or audio recordings as part of the discovery, such as dashcam footage, recorded interviews, etc. Currently, the only way an inmate can review the audio or video discovery is if their attorney visits the inmate at the jail in person and the attorney brings their own laptop or other equipment. This is inherently problematic because it limits the inmate's ability to review the evidence in his or her own case and gives them only limited access to this evidence.

Recommendations:

- An external CD player could easily be obtained, either at a low cost or perhaps by donation, which should be compatible with the computers in the library. This would allow inmates to have expanded access to the information that they have a right to access. Alternatively, a laptop with a built-in CD player and disabled access could be obtained and available for such usage.

Visitation

Non-contact visits are allowed for 30 minutes per day, with up to two people at a time, for up to four days per week. Children are allowed to have non-contact visits with a parent, but they must be accompanied by a guardian and a copy of the child's birth certificate is required. Non-contact visits limit bonding especially between a parent and visiting child. Additionally, there is very limited space for visits.

Contact visits are required by statute and per [Detention and Correctional Standards for Maine](#), subject to limitations for safety purposes. There are no contact visits allowed at FCDC, under any circumstances. This is due to drug trafficking concerns and staffing issues.

There are currently no Zoom visits allowed, due to staff shortages and lack of officers to supervise.

Recommendations:

- The number of visits allowed per week is generous. However, thirty minutes is a short period of time especially if the visitor is traveling a long distance. The jail is very flexible in accommodating people who have traveled a long distance.
- The jail should also broadly facilitate Zoom/remote visitation. Zoom allows video chats to be time-limited and recorded, which could provide a simple solution to the staffing issue.

Inmate Classification and Segregation

Classification

The FCDC's official policy regarding classification requires every incoming inmate to have a preliminary classification within 72 hours of entering the jail, which should result in a preliminary classification of minimum, medium, or maximum-security status. It was reported that this preliminary classification is not always happening within this time frame. After the preliminary classification, it takes up to 15 days for a full assessment by the FCDC Classification Specialist.

Last year's BOV report discussed the levels of classification and the difference in housing areas for each. With the relatively recent increase in inmates, the jail now reports that maximum security is usually at capacity. This is an unfortunate update from last year's report, at which time maximum security was rarely at full capacity.

Segregation

FCDC uses Administrative Segregation ("AD-Seg") when an inmate must be removed from the general population, which could be as a result of a disciplinary measure, to investigate a potential infraction, for medical reasons, or for protective custody purposes. The rules for AD-Seg are as follows: one book, one pencil, hygiene and stationary commissary is allowed (but no food or drink). An inmate in AD-Seg is allowed an hour out in the day room to shower, clean their room, watch TV and make phone calls.

Disciplinary segregation (D-Seg) is for any punitive write-up an inmate has received from an Officer after a disciplinary process and hearing. This could range from swearing at an officer to a physical fight with staff or inmates and anything in between. The rules for D-Seg are the same as AD-Seg, except that the inmate is not allowed to watch TV or make any phone calls, unless the call is to their lawyer. Inmates are subject to varying degrees of confinement based on staff interpretation.

FCDC defines "solitary confinement" as 24 hours in lock down. Because FCDC does up to 23 hours in confinement, FCDC does not consider this solitary confinement. There is no official widespread definition of what is considered solitary confinement. However, the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (also referred to as "the Nelson Mandela Rules", available [here](#)) defines solitary confinement as "the confinement of prisoners for 22 hours or more a day without meaningful human contact" and recommends

that the use of solitary confinement be restricted to “a measure of last resort to be used only in exceptional circumstances.”

Current practice is to find another more appropriate facility for anyone needing long-term segregation from the rest of the population.

Recommendations:

- Examine the time it takes to classify new inmates as minimum, medium or maximum to ensure this is happening within the 72-hour timeframe.
- Follow the United Nations standards on solitary confinement, revise FCDC’s definition of solitary confinement to mean 22 or hours or more a day and provide inmates with at least 2 hours of meaningful human interaction while, and restrict use of solitary confinement to a method of last resort only in exceptional circumstances.
- “Exceptional circumstances” should not include staffing issues.

Segregation by Gender

Last year’s BOV report includes a section pertaining to trans and nonbinary inmates, which discussed FCDC’s policy to keep trans and nonbinary residents separate from the male and female inmates at all times, including for recreation time and services. There is no separate housing section available for trans and nonbinary residents. FCDC uses the 72-hour holding cell and 12-hour dry cell for trans and nonbinary inmates. For comparison, Somerset County Detention Center houses its trans residents according to the gender with which the resident identifies.

In the past few months, the jail has seen an increase in female inmates. The jail anecdotally reports that a large percentage of arrests are substance-related, which is consistent with trends the jail is seeing overall. Previously, the jail had one or two female inmates on average. For the past few months, there have often been three to five female inmates. The female housing area is one cell that can house three inmates. When there have been more inmates, the jail has put a cot in the dayroom for a fourth female inmate. On the occasion when there have been five female inmates, the jail has kept the fifth inmate in one of the holding cells.

There is no plan to expand the female inmate section with the jail’s expansion project. If the jail has more than three female inmates for an extended period of time, the jail has two possible solutions that it can utilize. One solution that the jail might employ is moving the male residents out of the

minimum-security holding area and combining them with the rest of the male residents. The minimum-security unit houses eight residents. Another option is to work with Somerset County Detention Center for the additional residents to board there. Franklin County has a good working relationship with Somerset County and they often swap residents or board each other's residents. A few months ago, one of Franklin County's female inmates was swapped with a Somerset County female inmate. It was not a capacity issue, because Franklin County had three female inmates before the swap but the same number after the swap. But the residents at Franklin County either had no-contact conditions between them or the jail had determined that they should not be housed together, and there is not enough space to keep them separate.

The current record-keeping system, referenced in the "Infrastructure" section above, is not easily able to produce reports for the jail regarding their statistics and demographics. The 2025 upgrade for the record-keeping system will hopefully facilitate the jail in generating better reports to keep track of statistics.

Recommendations:

- Ideally, more space would be allocated for female, trans, and nonbinary inmates.
- There is a great risk of functional solitary confinement for female, trans, and nonbinary residents because it is very likely that the inmate will be housed alone, as a result of these infrastructure failures. One solution is for FCDC to send any inmate who will be housed alone as a result of anything other than D-Seg to Somerset County, where they are much more likely to be housed with other residents.
- FCDC should develop gender responsive policies to counter the isolation and inequities experienced by female, trans, and nonbinary residents.

Medical and Mental Health Services

Medical Services

It has been a year of change for medical services at the jail. MedPro is no longer the contracted provider. The new provider is Alternative Correctional Healthcare (“ACH”). Sallie Albert is the owner/director. The current medical staff full-time on site is a single nurse, Pamela Walp, LPN, who has been employed since July 2022. Greg Ellis, PA, continues as the medical provider, and is on site at FCDC once per week, which is usually on the weekends. The Director of Medical Services continues to be Dr. Jim Berry. A second nurse, Elizabeth Blake, RN, provides coverage 3 hours per week and also provides vacation coverage. There is a critical need for more staffing and for more support for Pamela, as paperwork and the acuity of medical problems have increased considerably at FCDC.

In 2023, Nurse Walp often worked 12 hours a day, seven days a week. Her schedule has been adapted so that she now works from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. This has necessitated a change regarding when med pass occurs. Instead of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., it is 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. The change has made Nurse Walp’s schedule much more livable but has necessitated schedule adjustments for other staff.

The physical space remains the same. As discussed in the infrastructure section above, plans have been made to significantly upgrade the medical space with ARPA funding, to include two negative-pressure holding cells, administrative space, and a larger examination area. The ventilation and heating/cooling systems will likewise be brought up to code. This past winter, the pipes to the heating and cooling unit in the medical room burst. Repairs have not yet been made. A space heater is in use during the day but unplugged at night. It is very cold in the room at the start of the day.

Deteriorated furnishings are gradually being replaced; a new (used) desk and filing cabinet were added last year. A new med cart has been purchased. There is a promise of a new exam table provided by ACH sometime within the next few months. These improvements are vital to the safety and effectiveness of medical personnel and inmates alike.

Some technological deficiencies remain unaddressed. However, a separate dedicated phone line has been installed and a separate line, along with a new high-capacity fax machine, have made communication with community medical providers easier, timelier, and more efficient. The new phone allows medical to be connected with everyone in the facility. There is more use of

computer technology, but it still may not allow for the efficient organization and security of medical records. The contracted medical provider will begin the digitization of medical data later this year, assisting in HIPAA compliance. Nurse Walp has also consolidated all of the medical records and moved them into the medical room where they can be locked at night, which meets HIPAA requirements for ensuring confidentiality of medical records.

Medically assisted treatment (MAT) with buprenorphine for opioid use disorder remains available, including induction of treatment for jail residents with a history of this illness. Since substance use disorder (“SUD”) affects a large proportion of jail residents, provision of this treatment is critical for reducing the risk of relapse and overdose deaths upon release. Under the new medical provider, FCDC has instituted a rapid induction protocol. Each resident undergoes a urine test that contains a detection panel for 14 different drugs. Residents no longer have to go through withdrawal before receiving SUD treatment. This is a welcome change and has reduced the medical risk and pain and suffering associated with withdrawal while waiting to begin treatment. Nurse Walp reports the new protocol has been a tremendous improvement in care.

A new method of providing MAT has become available in the community, involving the use of depot injection of buprenorphine, called Sublocade. One dose lasts approximately 28 days and its use would reduce the workload of medical personnel who now have to administer daily doses under strict protocols to ensure compliance and prevent hoarding or diversion. Although expensive per dose, savings may be realized in the reduction of staff time and improved efficacy of treatment. Somerset County Detention Center piloted this program and recently reported that 2 out of 3 inmates on Sublocade follow through on attending their first medical appointment after being released, compared to 1 out of 10 inmates on 24-hour Suboxone. They also saw a decrease in recidivism rates. A recent article about the program can be found [here](#). The full evaluation of this pilot has not been released yet but the BOV is eager to review it. Sheriff Nichols and the Healthy Community Coalition intend to reapply for a grant to cover the up-front costs. The BOV supports this plan and appreciates the Sheriff’s initiative and the unanimous support of the County Commissioners for pursuing these funds. There may also be funding opportunities available from the county opioid settlement funds.

In early December 2023, the state Opioid Settlement Task Force announced that funds will be made available for a detox facility in Franklin County. Should that come to fruition, the facility could have a significant positive effect on treatment for SUD in Franklin County.

Naloxone is available and accessible in several locations at the jail, in the event of overdose. Naloxone kits are offered to all residents upon release. The Healthy Community Coalition has been an invaluable partner in providing this life-saving medication and the training and education to use it most effectively. The kits are placed in resident lockers with their belongings prior to release.

An influx of xylazine cases occurred at the end of last year but seems to have diminished recently. Xylazine does not respond to Naloxone. A side effect is tissue necrosis.

FCDC provides healthcare for female inmates, including birth control. In the last year there have been no pregnant women.

Recommendations:

- Explore partnership with the local health system to provide additional expertise with co-occurring disorders (mental health and substance use) services.
- Meet with Alternative Correctional Healthcare to discuss concerns and develop a plan to address gaps in care.
- Board of Visitors to meet with Medical Providers to better understand how medications are verified, dispensed, and administered.
- Explore the care team model (weekly meetings across sectors, mental health and healthcare provider, Intensive Case Management (“ICM”), etc.) to work collectively on medical care for inmates to ensure the best care is being provided.
- Investigate and monitor medical treatment of the inmates, which is a critical function and responsibility of FCDC even though it is being provided by a contracted agency. Ensure that treatment is based on the needs of the residents and is not based on subjective or arbitrary factors.

Mental Health Services

Mental health services have also evolved in the past year. ACH was contracted to provide mental health services and support groups at the jail. David O’Donnell, LCPC, provides evaluation and counseling for substance abuse and general mental health for 16 hours, over the course of two days each week,

Monday and Wednesday. David has revamped the mental health offerings to provide several psychoeducation groups for jail residents. He also meets with residents individually on an as-needed basis. The groups have been well received and attendance is generally high, with sometimes as many as 14 attendees, depending on census and court obligations of residents. The jail reports that David is liked by the residents and there are no problems with his groups. He averages 5 groups per day. They meet in the library, which is truly a multi-purpose room, also used as a conference room, staff training room, and education site. Sometimes groups may not meet due to these other uses.

It is difficult to maintain privacy during these mental health services, since jail staff can walk through the library at any time. Consistency and privacy are important factors in creating an atmosphere where group members can speak openly and participate fully; these conditions guarantee neither. Space for private interactions is crucial.

Additionally, the mental health staff reports that, in order to really provide proper and appropriate diagnoses of the residents, the professional needs more time on average with each inmate. Mr. O'Donnell provides services to FCDC on Mondays and Wednesdays, which does not allow for meaningful conversations with Dr. Ellis, who is usually at the jail on weekends.

A major concern of mental health staff and the BOV is that the jail environment is not conducive to good mental health. Although residents are supposed to receive an hour of exercise each day, this often does not happen either because of low staffing, perceived safety threats, or weather that impacts outdoor recreation opportunities.

One important factor to promote mental health is sleep. There are an increasing number of complaints from residents regarding their ability to sleep at the jail. The evening medication pass is at 6:00 p.m. each night, including medications that may cause drowsiness. "Lights Out" at the jail is 10:00 p.m., so this may also be affecting the opportunity for residents to attain quality sleep.

Concerns have been expressed regarding the distribution, timing, and availability of prescription medications.

Another concern raised regarding the jail environment is that there is little opportunity for creativity. Although residents can have short pencils, they cannot have colored pencils. They do not have an opportunity to engage in artistic expression, which can provide therapeutic release and other benefits. The limited access to exercise, outdoors, and the barriers to educational programming is also a major concern. FCDC should take these concerns seriously to improve

conditions where possible to facilitate mental health improvement for its residents.

Recommendations:

- Increase mental health services from 16 to at least 24 hours per week.
- Facilitate the collaboration between mental health and medical services to foster stronger partnership and avoid working in silos.
- Explore ways to promote health and wellness for inmates; this could be increased opportunities for creative arts and art materials, ensuring proper sleep hygiene, and increasing physical activity options.
- Identify and implement strategies to promote sleep hygiene.
- Board of Visitors should meet with Medical Providers.

Education

Franklin County Detention Center educational services are provided through a contract with Franklin County Adult Education, a component of RSU #9. The teacher is Cassidy Marsh, who also works for MSAD #54 as the instructor in the Somerset Detention Center.

This is Ms. Marsh's second full year of teaching at the detention center. She has attended professional development in correctional instruction provided by Maine Adult Education Association and the Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE). She has applied and been accepted to participate in COABE's State Advocacy for Adult Education Fellowship, a national incarcerated teaching training program. This professional development has afforded a deep understanding of adult education teaching methods and correctional education.

FCDC educational classes run on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the library. As discussed in other sections of this report, the library is a shared space that is often claimed for staff training or other meetings that make a consistent instructional schedule almost impossible.

Educational services include both basic and secondary educational instruction along with diploma, HiSET (GED equivalent) and post-secondary academic training. Over the past several years, there has been a trend of inmates already having their high school credentials. While this does not mean they would not benefit from academic instruction, it makes it harder to convince them to participate in educational opportunities. To encourage participation and increase employment opportunities upon release, OSHA safety training has been offered via online instruction in general and construction modules.

In 2023, the program saw one HiSET graduate and two OSHA certificate completers. Increased participation from the inmates in educational courses should be encouraged. It seems that participation might be impacted by inmates that express that they are tired and do not have the energy to participate, conflicts with recreation time, and the interruption of services into the education space, which causes a loss in progress and consistency.

It was hoped that offering more work-related skill building courses would encourage greater participation. Inmates are interested, but the limited time with one computer slows down the rate of success. A suggestion to increase successful OSHA certification will be to make a second computer available for training, so two can work at once on the program to increase completion rates. In

last year's BOV report, we recommended that FCDC allow more than one inmate in the library at a time, which would facilitate this.

Additionally, it is reported that opportunities for religious services are limited. There is one chaplain who is shared with three counties, so he is not regularly at FCDC. To offer additional religious services, FCDC could partner with local churches and local religious services/practices to provide additional options for services. FCDC could also enlist an onsite chaplain. The residents of the jail could also be surveyed regularly to determine what services they would like to be made available. Online services could also be explored.

The recurring complaint among residents that they are too tired and lack energy to participate in educational activities that get them out of their confined space is concerning. We are not sure if it is directly related to depression, medication timing, other jail conditions, or some other factor. There has been an increase in this complaint, so it is the BOV's goal to continue to explore and monitor this situation to identify a solution. It is our hope that FCDC will do the same.

To reduce the interruption of educational learning, the BOV fully supports and recommends additional space for staff training and meetings in other locations on the campus. Losing anticipated time to learn because physical space is unavailable is a source of frustration, disrupts learning, and leads to distrust in the system. A regularly timed learning schedule helps students build habits of mind and work, as well as knowledge at a faster pace.

In last year's BOV report, we set a goal to increase community volunteer participation in educational opportunities at the detention center. There are two additional courses that have been offered. The first was an 8-week writing class provided this spring by Patricia O'Donnell, a retired UMF professor. The second was a weekly parenting class offered by the Franklin County Children's Task Force in Farmington. This class has been offered continuously for six months. The BOV hopes to see the educational and training offerings expanded.

Another recommendation from last year was to switch the HiSET testing system in the computer system. This change is required to offer online testing at the detention center. However, paper-based testing is still being used, and it looks like the company controlling the HiSET will be changing again. When the merger is complete, changes to the system will be done at that time. Until then, paper-based testing will continue.

The status of last year's recommendations from the BOV are as follows:

<u>Recommendation:</u>	<u>Status:</u>
Allow more than one student in the education/library room at a time.	COMPLETE
Change over the HiSET system by April to allow for more computer use by students.	IN PROGRESS
Develop a volunteer list of interested citizens to provide classes to increase options.	COMPLETE, LOOKING TO EXPAND

Recommendations:

- Finish the expansion project which will create an additional conference room space in the Administrative Building, which will alleviate some of the issues with sharing the library with staff. Continuity of educational services is a must to help with academic success.
- Support the addition/reconfiguration of space at FCDC to provide additional space for other inmate support services to be offered in other locations rather than the library.
- Examine the timing of med pass delivery, recreational time, and other factors that are impacting the ability of residents to participate in educational activities.
- Conduct regular surveys of residents to gauge career interests and explore whether additional educational and/or training programs can be added to the educational offerings. Investigate the cost and ability of bringing the training to the FCDC and partner with local agencies as much as possible.
- Continue to build the volunteer class list.
- Research possible training programs for addition to the current offerings.
- Research ways to attract and/or incentivize potential students to participate in educational programming.
- Offer additional religious services through either an onsite chaplain, or partnership with local churches and services, or explore remote options. Gather input from residents about what services should be available.

Re-Entry Services

Much of the re-entry work lies with Cheryl Rackliff, the Forensic Intensive Case Manager at DHHS. Cheryl works with most inmates on linking to community resources, such as housing, treatment and health care. Cheryl faces challenges with meeting with inmates in a confidential space. Currently, she shares a space with Maine Pretrial Services and this causes concerns with privacy and her ability to do all her work at the jail. Cheryl has to go back and forth between her DHHS office and the Jail. To be more efficient, she needs to have her own space with a computer and printer setup allowing her to provide all of her services right from the jail.

Housing, transportation and medical care upon re-entry still pose challenges. For inmates who need ongoing healthcare, there needs to be a bridge program to quickly get them into primary care/treatment services to manage their healthcare.

Maine Pretrial Services also facilitates re-entry for qualified residents. This contract allows the resident to be released from the facility and placed on a monitoring contract, which generally includes conditions such as regular check-ins, urine screens, and other conditions.

Recommendations:

- Explore re-entry best practices recommendations on strength-based case management. This focuses on the strengths of individuals and leverages these strengths to help inmates achieve their goals and meet their needs. This would be a culture shift for jail staff and training and education would be required.
- Explore re-entry service grants to build a robust re-entry service program.
- Ensure that ICM and Maine Pretrial Services have enough available time and adequate access to residents to meet the needs of the residents.

Treatment and Recovery Court Services

Franklin and Oxford Counties have recently been a part of the Maine Judicial Branch's efforts to introduce more alternative "specialty" courts, which include Adult Treatment and Recovery Court, Co-occurring Disorders Court, Veterans Court, Family Court. Franklin County defendants have access to Adult Treatment and Recovery Court. Unfortunately, this specialty court operates entirely out of Oxford County. Franklin County defendants are eligible for participation in the specialty court treatment program if they meet other eligibility criteria.

Treatment and Recovery Court is a unique court process. Each Treatment and Recovery Court has a specially assigned Judge that handles all Recovery Court cases. There is also a specially assigned Assistant District Attorney for each Treatment and Recovery Court to represent the State, as well as a specially assigned Defense Attorney. There is also a team of case managers and providers accessible to Recovery Court. This means that there is a consistent team of people working with each recovery court participant, which allows the team to be very familiar with each individual participant.

Treatment Court has been proven to increase a person's chances of successful re-entry into their community and reduce the individual's likelihood of recidivism. Participation in the program generally requires regular mental health counseling, substance use counseling, group therapy, and frequent attendance at court.

Recommendations:

- Provide robust education on treatment and recovery court services to all parties involved to increase the number of inmates who are utilizing this service.
- Explore Treatment and Recovery Court grants and advocate for the program to become more available and accessible to the residents of Franklin County. Franklin County defendants should be encouraged to find out whether they are eligible and determine whether treatment court would be a good fit for them.