



Justin P. Wilson, Comptroller

January 10, 2020

Tennessee Department of Correction Leaders Must Improve Oversight

The Tennessee Comptroller's Office has released a performance audit of the Tennessee Department of Correction (TDOC) and the results will require many improvements.

The audit contains 18 findings and numerous observations detailing areas where problems need to be addressed. These issues will be presented to the Joint Government Operations Subcommittee on Judiciary and Government on January 13 at 9:00 a.m. in House Hearing Room I.

The audit's key conclusions include the following:

- TDOC's leadership must improve its oversight in order to ensure compliance with laws, regulations and polices; provide safe and secure facilities; and reduce the risk to public safety. (*Finding 1*)
- TDOC's annual inspection percentage scores of facilities do not provide a clear measure of correctional facility performance. These scores do not give additional weight to "critical" findings that may impact safety and security. (*Finding 2*)
- TDOC has not ensured that data on incidents, including deaths and other serious incidents, is valid and reliable. (*Findings 4, 5, and 6 and Observation 1*)
- TDOC should ensure that staff follow policies and procedures for investigating sexual abuse and harassment allegations. (*Finding 9*)
- TDOC did not ensure its medical and mental health contractors met required staffing levels, and it allowed contractors to offset assessed liquated damages outside of the contracts' authority. (*Findings 10 and 11*)
- TDOC must be able to demonstrate that inmates are receiving sufficient medical and mental health services. (*Findings 12, and 13 and Observations 4 and 5*)
- TDOC and CoreCivic must continue efforts to ensure adequate staffing in order to provide safe and secure facilities. CoreCivic must also continue making progress on the accuracy of its monthly staffing reports. (*Findings 14 and Observations 6 and 7*)
- Management must ensure staff perform inmate screenings within required timeframes. Management must also be sure inmates are aware of information and services the department provides. (*Findings 15 and 16 and Observation 10*)
- Although there has been improvement, the department has still not ensured adequate monitoring of individuals placed on parole or probation. (*Finding 17 and Observation 11*)
- The department has had difficulties in replacing its outdated information management system for offender data. (*Observation 12*)
- Department management did not ensure that its staff and CoreCivic complied with public records regulations, resulting in lost records as well as potential evidence. (*Finding 18 and Observation 13*)
- The department has not reported recidivism rates for inmates who participated in educational and vocational programs, as required by statute.

"I encourage TDOC management to review each of these findings and develop plans to correct them," said Comptroller Justin P. Wilson. "It's likely this will include revising current policies, training and re-training staff, and

performing additional monitoring to ensure laws and policies are being followed.”

The full audit report can be found [here](#).

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