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Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC)
September 2025 Site Tour Observations
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In accordance with the Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission's (the Commission, HCSOC) mandate to oversee the State's correctional system, on Thursday, September 11, 2025, the Commission toured the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC) collectively as a group. The tour included one of the five Commissioners –Martha Torney in addition to the Oversight Coordinator and staff. The Commission had unfettered access to staff and the facility.

General Observations

During the Commission's prior visit in August 2024, there were three new buildings under construction: Building A (a secure housing unit now called "Pakui"), Building B (intake), and Building C (administration). All three structures are now complete. The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) is working with the Commission to rate the housing capacity for Pakui, the new secure housing unit.

Olomana Cottage

Olomana Cottage has a total capacity for 72 people between four dorms (Dorms A, B, C, and D) and primarily house people with a range of mental health issues. At the Commission's request, the mental health staff accompanied the Commission while touring the unit. Olomana Cottage reportedly does not have an assigned Case Manager and shares the Kaala Cottage Case Manager. People in custody report that the Case Manager does not spend adequate time in Olomana Cottage so when she comes to the unit, she is immediately overwhelmed with questions and requests. People in custody are aware of staffing shortages and do not fault the Case Manager.

Dorm A

On the day of the visit, the census for Dorm A was 38, with a 172% occupancy. Dorm A is a dormitory setting divided into cubicles separated by half walls with three to five individuals assigned to each cubicle. The jail population who are designated as medium to high acuity (primarily Level 3, some Level 2) occupy Dorm A.

Reading material is available, but a common complaint received from people in custody is that books are not rotated often enough. Another common complaint from people in custody pertains to how the Store Order is only every two weeks and expensive compared to costs in the community, which often leads to people in custody asking the facility to

provide snacks, especially in the evening. The time between dinner and breakfast is at least 12 hours, which is a common complaint at other facilities.

In the bathroom area, there were a number of problems indicative of the aging facility (opened in about 1952). Two of the sinks had poor water pressure. Of the four showers, hot water was not always available. People in custody discovered that if they kept one shower on all the time, there was more reliable hot water in the others. The first toilet was malfunctioning as the flush push button did not always work.

Dorm B

On the day of the visit, the census for Dorm B was 13, with a 108% occupancy. Dorm B is made up of cells, all but two single celled. People in custody designated as medium to high mental health acuity occupy Dorm B.

Dorm C

On the day of the visit, the census for Dorm C was 21, with a 131% occupancy. Dorm C houses people with high mental health acuity in single cells and is the disciplinary unit for the Cottage. The Commission spoke with one person in custody who was reading a book prior to our discussion. Books are available but not tablets, which the person in custody would like to have access to. She also noted that those in Dorm C do not have much out-of-cell time, averaging one hour per day. This is concerning to the Commission given that individuals with mental health issues need more access to out of cell time.

Pakui Cottage

Pakui was recently built and occupied for less than one year. Pakui Cottage has three dorms (Dorm A, B , and C) and houses the prison population. The Commission is currently in the process of determining its operating capacity. Offender Services provides classes on a variety of subjects on Monday and Wednesday, Tuesday and Thursday are ukulele classes.

Dorm A

Dorm A is two stories and divided into cubicles with floor-to-ceiling side walls separating each cubicle and an open front. There are four cubicles on each floor, with four double-bunks in each cubicle for a total of eight beds. The bottom floor opens into the dayroom, the upper floor is an open hallway overlooking the dayroom.

The most common complaint was lack of airflow in the cubicle, resulting in hot conditions that were obvious during our tour. The windows, while providing adequate daylight, have small louvers on the top that open. Two plug-in fans were assigned to each cubicle but did not provide enough air flow to reduce the heat.

People in custody reported that many programs needed for parole eligibility were restricted from medium and close custody inmates. An example used was the Residential Drug Abuse Program (RDAP) only accepting minimum custody individuals. Other programs were available to all, as stated above.

Some complained that the mattresses become flattened over time, resulting in less cushion between the person and the hard bunk.

Dorm B

Dorm B, the same layout as Dorm A, is designated the Honor Dorm with individuals having more freedom of movement and access to classes outside the living unit. Some were interested in going to the new gym in Kaala Cottage that was literally donated to the prison population by the Women's Prison Project. However, it is challenging to manage security of escorting individuals when the pretrial and sentenced population must remain separate (the gym is located where pretrial individuals are housed).

One person in custody complained about the lack of a notary at the facility. In the past, facility secretaries and other clerical workers were trained as state notaries and provided notary services to people in custody and, when needed, for official business carried out by State employees. It appears that the Department no longer allows this.

Dorm C

Dorm C is two stories with 12 cells on each floor. People in custody assigned to Dorm C include those classified as Maximum custody, Protective Custody or housed in disciplinary segregation as a result of a misconduct. The space is used judiciously, with only 14 people in custody occupying the 24 cells available. People in custody are given one hour per day out of cell, during which time they have access to phones or tablets for contacting their families or participating in programming available on the tablet.

Maunawili Cottage

Maunawili Cottage is where the library, education services, medical and infirmary, and the kitchen are located. No people in custody are housed in Maunawili Cottage.

Education

The Education Supervisor shared some of the programs offered including obtaining a GED, Dental Assistance Training, Career Building, Mindfulness, etc. Windward Community College provides college courses, such as Psychology 100, Religion 150, English 100, and the very popular Culinary Arts. The educational staff are doing a great job in offering a variety of courses.

Library

The library has a very large selection of books available. At the time of the visit, there were no staff available to explain how people in custody access the law library.

Medical

Medical staff noted the medical records system is running very slow which can impede their work. There are also a number of vacancies that include one RN IV, three RN III, two

LPN II, and two Human Service Professionals. Medical staff were informed that agency nurses will not be assigned after September 30th due to “lack of funds.” Medical staff at MCCC reported the same staffing issue and removal of agency nurses. Given that the Fiscal Year began on July 1, 2025, it is very concerning to the Commission that no funds may be available after the first quarter of the fiscal year.

Infirmary

The infirmary had one woman in the general room and three women in cells. Two of the women in cells were on suicide watch, the third on safety watch. When passing through the area where the cells are, the Adult Corrections Office (ACO) assigned was not at the desk, but in a room across from the cells talking with what appeared to be a person in custody on the work line. The Commission does not know how long the ACO was away from the desk, however, suicide watch requires constant surveillance.

Kitchen

The kitchen was busy preparing for dinner, but it was clean and in good order, especially for being 60 years old. There was only one piece of equipment (the steam cooker) in need of repair. The cooker produces heat but no steam, however, maintenance is being scheduled. The refrigerator and freezer temperatures were appropriate. The pantry was full, well organized and allowed air to flow adequately.

Follow Up on Previous Recommendations

While touring WCCC in 2024, the Commission noted a large number of women housed in the infirmary on suicide watch. After inquiring, the Commission learned that since February 2024, WCCC did not have a psychologist on staff. This caused a very serious backlog of individuals on suicide watch who otherwise would have been removed. However, the Commission has learned that DCR hired Dr. Erin Wilkinson in July 2025, who is an experienced Psychologist and has already started evaluating DCR’s mental health needs. The amount of individuals on suicide watch was significantly less concerning and the Commission applauds DCR’s recruitment efforts.

The Commission has no additional recommendations currently and extends special thanks to the WCCC staff for their time, professionalism, and expertise during the tour.