



Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission

Monthly Oversight Coordinator Report – October 2025

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Introduction

In accordance with Chapter §353L-6, the Oversight Coordinator shall submit a monthly report to the Commission, the Governor, and the Legislature. The monthly report shall include actions taken by the Commission and expenses for the preceding month. In addition to the mandated parties this report must be shared with, the Oversight Coordinator publicly posts the monthly report to increase transparency and accountability. This report will also be shared with each individual who has the responsibility of appointing members of the Commission. This includes:

- 1) Governor of Hawaii
- 2) President of the Hawaii Senate
- 3) Speaker of the Hawaii House of Representatives
- 4) Hawaii Supreme Court Chief Justice
- 5) Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs

The Oversight Coordinator monthly reports are released on the first Thursday of each month, covering the previous month, and will be discussed on the second Thursday of each month at the monthly Commission meetings.

Deaths in Custody

1. On Thursday November 6, 2025, at approximately 9:12am, a male in custody 62 years old, was found unresponsive in his cell. 911 was called, CPR was immediately conducted, and around 9:34am, Eloy EMS took over life saving measures. Unfortunately, at 9:50am, the individual was pronounced deceased. An autopsy will determine the official cause of death.
2. On Thursday, November 6, 2025, at approximately 2:33pm, a Hawaiian male, 38 years old, was found unresponsive in his cell. Staff immediately responded, conducted CPR, and alerted 911 emergency services. EMS arrived around 2:56pm and continued life saving measures. Unfortunately, 3:51pm, this individual was pronounced deceased. This death appears to be a suicide. An autopsy will determine the official cause of death.

Tours

WCCC Transforming Animal and Incarcerated Individuals' Lives (TAIL) Pilot program

On October 6, 2025, Commission staff visited the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC) Ho'okipa Cottage to observe the Transforming Animal and Incarcerated Individuals' Lives (TAIL) pilot project. The visit highlighted how animal-assisted programs can promote healing, responsibility, and emotional well-being for incarcerated women. Two participants shared that caring for the kittens has helped them build new relationships and connect with people they had never spoken to before. Staff and residents expressed that the program has been heartwarming, bringing a sense of calm, unity, and purpose to the cottage. The Department received \$50,000 in funding for WCCC to support cat care and food, helping sustain this positive initiative. The women appear to genuinely

enjoy the program, which reflects how compassion-based approaches can strengthen rehabilitation and community within correctional settings.

Events Attended

House Committee on Public Safety Informational Briefing on Compassionate Release

On October 6, 2025, the House Committee on Public Safety hosted an informational briefing on compassionate release. The briefing included a presentation from Molly Crane, Equal Justice Works Fellow, Families for Justice Reform (FAMM), with brief comments and questions answered by Christin M. Johnson, Oversight Coordinator, Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission. The goal of the presentation was to help legislators and the general public understand the importance and significance of compassionate release, and to support upcoming legislation to embed compassionate release in statute. The presentation can be found here:

https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/CommitteeFiles/HOUSE/PBS/PBSfiles/2025_FAMM_Presentation.pdf

Restrictive Housing Legislative Working Group

On October 16, 2025, Chair Patterson participated in the Restrictive Housing Legislative Working group as a member of the working group. The Restrictive Housing Legislative Working Group also completed an on-site inspection of Halawa Correctional Facility, with special interest given to the Restrictive Housing Unit on October 28, 2025, however Chair Patterson and Oversight Coordinator Johnson were unable to attend due to a travel conflict. The Act 292 Restrictive Housing Legislative Working Group was established by the Legislature and enacted into law by Governor Joshua Green on July 3, 2025, to develop and recommend more comprehensive laws, policies, and procedures regarding restrictive housing for members of vulnerable populations.

The Act 292 Working Group is tasked with reviewing, considering, and identifying laws, policies, and procedures regarding restrictive housing for members of vulnerable populations including committed persons who: (a) are sixty years of age or elder; (b) have a physical or mental disability, a history of psychiatric hospitalization, or recently exhibited conduct, including serious self-mutilation, that indicates the need for further observation or evaluation to determine the presence of mental illness; (c) have a developmental disability, as defined in HRS Section 333F-1; (d) have a serious mental condition that cannot be effectively treated while the committed person is in restrictive housing; (e) have a significant auditory or visual impairment; or (f) is perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex. Act 292 (SLH2025) directs the Working Group to submit its recommendations to the Legislature by January 8, 2027. More information on the Working Group can be found here:

<https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/legislature/specialcommittee.aspx?comm=rhg&year=2025>

Conferences

National Reentry Workforce Collaborative 2025 Conference

From October 21 through October 24, Chair Patterson, Oversight Coordinator Johnson, and Commission staff attended the *From Incarceration to Transformation: National Reentry Workforce Conference (NRWC)* in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The conference focused on hope, collaboration, lived experience, and innovation in reentry and workforce development. Commission staff co-presented *Reentry Begins on the Inside: A Three-State Comparison of In-Prison Programming* alongside John Howard Association and the Correctional Association of New York, highlighting Hawai‘i’s oversight and reentry initiatives. Connections were made with national partners such as KISRA, Resilience Education, CareerTeam, Homeboy Industries, and the Petey Greene Program, each offering valuable models and potential collaborations to support reentry in Hawai‘i. The event reinforced that reentry is built on relationships, opportunity, compassion, and the power of lived experience — key principles guiding Hawai‘i’s ongoing reentry work.

National Association of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) 2025 Conference – Minneapolis, MN

From October 26 through October 29, Chair Patterson, Oversight Coordinator Johnson, and Commission staff attended the *National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) Annual Conference* in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The conference brought together national oversight leaders to discuss accountability, transparency, and community trust in the wake of incidents that deeply impacted the nation — including the deaths of George Floyd and Philando Castile, both of which occurred in Minnesota. Presenters reflected on how these tragedies reshaped public expectations and policies around oversight and reform, while acknowledging the ongoing challenges with achieving true accountability in civilian oversight of law enforcement.

In addition to powerful keynote sessions, the conference offered specialized breakout forums specifically for executive leadership, investigators, and boards and commissions. The conference also offered breakout discussions on best practices in data use, community engagement, and civilian review processes. The Commission gained valuable insight into national strategies that align with Hawai‘i’s mission to ensure fairness, dignity, and trust within its correctional system, and had the opportunity to present in four separate panels including:

- Surviving the Storm: Building and Rebuilding Correctional Oversight in the Face of Political Pressure *presented by Christin Johnson, Oversight Coordinator and Chair Mark Patterson*
- Deescalation in a Custody Setting *presented by Chair Mark Patterson*
- Accountability in Crisis: How Oversight Can Drive Solutions to Corrections Staffing Shortages *presented by Christin Johnson, Oversight Coordinator*
- Doing Oversight After Doing Time: How Lived Experience is Reshaping Correctional Oversight Practices *presented by Kimmy Takata, Reentry Oversight Specialist*



Chair Mark Patterson, Oversight Coordinator Christin Johnson, Jail Oversight Specialist Alec Jamerson, and Reentry Oversight Specialist Kimmy Takata attending and speaking at the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) 2025 conference.

Reports

Women's Community Correctional Center Site Observations

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 – Commissioner Torney in addition to the Oversight Coordinator and staff. There were no additional recommendations to be considered by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation that stemmed from the WCCC tour. The full report was published on October 9, 2025, and can be read at: <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/facility-specific-reports/>.

Oahu Community Correctional Center Site Observations

On Wednesday, September 17, 2025, the Commission toured the Oahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC) collectively as a group. The tour included three of the five Commissioners – Chair Patterson, Commissioner Torney, and Commissioner Browning–in addition to the Oversight Coordinator, staff, and State House Representatives Della Au Belatti and Kim Coco Iwamoto. Commissioner Town was present for a meeting with Warden John Schell prior to the tour.

Below are recommendations to be considered by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation which stemmed from the OCCC tour. The full report was published on October 9, 2025, and can be read at: <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/facility-specific-reports/>.

Follow-up on Previous Commission Recommendations

The Commission made the following recommendations following the HCSOC February 2023 tour, which have not yet been implemented. The Commission continues to recommend the following:

- 1) Allow for Natural Light by Removing Wood Covering from all Cell Windows**
Replace wood-covered windows in housing units with to allow natural light, in line with American Correctional Association (ACA) standards. Although some wood coverings have been removed over the past year, wood coverings still remain on some cell windows. According to ACA Standard 4-ALDF-1A-16, all inmate rooms/cells must provide occupants with access to natural light through at least three square feet of transparent glazing, plus two additional square feet per inmate in rooms/cells housing three or more individuals. Therefore, the Commission recommends OCCC continue replacing wood coverings to ensure all cell windows in all modules allow natural light. Compliance with the ACA standards is of particular importance with OCCC moving toward ACA accreditation.
- 2) Restoration of Contact Visits**
OCCC has not offered in-person contact visits for five years, initially due to COVID-19. Extensive research underscores the importance and rehabilitative benefits of contact visits for those in custody, as these visits allow individuals to maintain closer connections with their loved ones and communities. The Commission therefore continues to recommend OCCC reinstate contact visits.
- 3) Expand Programming Opportunities**
People in custody at OCCC have too much idle time and limited access to programming, including cultural, education, and reentry preparation. The Commission recommends expanding programming opportunities and community partnerships to reduce idle time and increase programming opportunities. While the facility has made some progress in this area, it is essential to continue and be innovative (even within limited space) to support people in custody and gain community support and trust.
- 4) Prioritize Kitchen Upgrades, Including Dishwasher Repair and Mold-Free Trays**
The kitchen at OCCC is in dire need of updates to ensure sanitary conditions for staff and the kitchen workline, and to provide safe food for the entire facility. Urgent repairs are needed for the dishwasher, along with replacement of ceiling and floor tiles, rusted appliances, and food service trays. Although there are plans for a new facility, these conditions cannot wait until then and must be addressed immediately.
- 5) Expand Furlough Utilization at OCCC**
Although OCCC has the highest furlough participation and occupancy rate in comparison to the other three jails, there is still opportunity to increase furlough participation at OCCC. Identifying and addressing the roadblocks to furlough is crucial to allow more individuals to benefit from these programs and move through the correctional system. The Commission recommends that DCR assess, identify, and resolve systemic issues around furlough participation. The Commission would like to see furlough occupancy rates near 100% as it significantly increases the chances of success post-release.

6) Install Shade for Recreation Cages in the Holding Unit

The recreation area outside the Holding Unit consists of individual cages, which currently lack shaded areas to protect people in custody from the sun. The Commission recommends installing shade structures, even tarps, to provide protection from sun exposure.

7) Investigate and Address Concerns from People in Custody at OCCC

The Commission has received multiple complaints regarding the following issues at OCCC:

- **Roaches in Cells:** Roaches are present in the cells. This poses a health and sanitation concern. The Commission recommends implementing a pest control plan that effectively and safely eliminates the roach population.
- **Difficulties in Accessing Bail Calls:** The Commission learned that some individuals have experienced delays of several weeks in accessing bail calls, which has prevented those who could make bail from being released. This delay not only impacts individual rights but also contributes to overcrowding. The Commission urges the facility to establish and confirm a reliable system that allows timely access to bail calls for all eligible individuals and ensures all people in custody have prompt access to bail calls.

8) Ensure Regular Access to Books and Reading Material, Legal Calls, Mail, and Recreation for Those in Holding Unit, including those in Disciplinary Segregation

People in custody in the holding unit at OCCC reported irregular access to legal calls, daily recreation, and inconsistent mail service, along with no books or reading material. ACA standards require the following access for people in disciplinary segregation:

Mail: Inmates in Restrictive Housing can write and receive letters on the same basis as inmates in the general population.

Source: American Correctional Association (ACA) Performance-Based Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions, 5th ed., March 2021, 4B Restrictive Housing, 5-ACI-4B-20, p. 128.

Access to Legal and Reading Materials: Inmates in Restrictive Housing have access to reading materials.

Source: American Correctional Association (ACA) Performance-Based Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions, 5th ed., March 2021, 4B Restrictive Housing, 5-ACI-4B-23, p. 129.

Exercise Out of Cell: Inmates in Restrictive Housing receive a minimum of one hour of exercise outside their cells, five days per week, unless security or safety considerations dictate otherwise."

Source: American Correctional Association (ACA) Performance-Based Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions, 5th ed., March 2021, 4B Restrictive Housing, 5-ACI-4B-24, p. 129.

Telephone Privileges: Inmates in Restrictive Housing are allowed at minimum telephone privileges to access the judicial process and family emergencies as determined by the facility administrator or designee unless security or safety considerations dictate otherwise.

Source: American Correctional Association (ACA) Performance-Based Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions, 5th ed., March 2021, 4B Restrictive Housing, 5-ACI-4B-25, p. 129.

Access to Programs: Inmates in Extended Restrictive Housing have access to programs and services that include but are not limited to the following: educational services, commissary services, library services, social services, behavioral health and treatment services, religious guidance, and recreational programs.

Source: American Correctional Association (ACA) Performance-Based Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions, 5th ed., March 2021, 4B Restrictive Housing, 5-ACI-4B-26, p. 130.

Additional Recommendations to be Considered by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation:

1) Evaluate the Impacts of Requiring Post Closures to Limit Overtime Costs

The Department needs to seriously consider how requiring post closures to limit overtime impacts daily access to showers, out-of-cell time, outdoor recreation, programming and general conditions of confinement. The Department should allow Wardens to make these decisions as they should know the needs of their facilities the best. Additionally, the Department should consider holding regular inter-divisional meetings between Division Administrators to evaluate the fiscal and humanitarian impacts of requiring post closures before authorizing overtime.

The Commission extends special thanks to the OCCC staff for their time, professionalism, and expertise during the tour. The Department responded to the OCCC on October 13, 2025 which is attached to this report.

Projects

Complaint Management

After receiving dedicated funding for a case management system from the legislature, the Commission secured a vendor to ensure a smooth and efficient system for the office. Commission staff are working through a 15-week systems integration process, which involves integrating the case tracking system developed by Commission staff with the newly developed case management system. Once this process is complete, the Commission will be better equipped for tracking, monitoring, investigating, and responding to incoming complaints.

Past Meetings

Monthly Commission Meeting

On October 9, 2025, the Commission hosted its monthly public meeting. All past meeting agendas, video recordings, meeting minutes, and testimonies can be found on our website here: <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/2025-meetings>. All meetings are live streamed on our [Facebook](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

Expenses for the Preceding Month – October

Item	Cost	Qty	Total	Description
Operating Expenses			\$4,459.62	
TELEPHONE	\$217.24	1	\$217.24	
OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$237.25	1	\$237.25	STAMP CONNECTION
PRINTING & BINDING	\$2,910.89	1	\$2,910.89	PROFESSIONAL IMAGE
OTHER CURRENT EXPENDITURES	\$1,094.24	1	\$1,094.24	ARTSMART
Inter-Island Travel			\$2,532.04	
AIRFARE-KRT	-\$174.29	1	-\$174.29	08/22 HAWAIIAN REFUND
AIRFARE-RI	\$137.58	1	\$137.58	09/04 HAWAIIAN
AIRFARE-ANJ	\$156.60	1	\$156.60	08/28 HAWAIIAN
AIRFARE-RI	-\$137.58	1	-\$137.58	09/04 HAWAIIAN REFUND
AIRFARE-ANJ	\$137.58	1	\$137.58	09/09 SOUTHWEST
AIRFARE-ANJ	\$179.05	1	\$179.05	09/18 HAWAIIAN
AIRFARE-KRT	\$151.86	1	\$151.86	10/07 ALASKA
AIRFARE-ANJ	\$175.59	1	\$175.59	10/10 SOUTHWEST
AIRFARE-KRT	\$175.59	1	\$175.59	10/10 SOUTHWEST
AIRFARE-ANJ	\$151.86	1	\$151.86	10/07 ALASKA
AIRFARE-KRT	\$166.10	1	\$166.10	10/08 SOUTHWEST
AIRFARE-ANJ	\$161.35	1	\$161.35	10/08 SOUTHWEST
AIRFARE-RI	\$175.59	1	\$175.59	10/09 ALASKA
AIRFARE-ANJ	\$137.58	1	\$137.58	10/21 SOUTHWEST
AIRFARE-MKP	\$137.58	1	\$137.58	11/13 ALASKA
AIRFARE-RMB	\$142.34	1	\$142.34	11/13 ALASKA
AIRFARE-CMJ	\$137.58	1	\$137.58	11/13 ALASKA
AIRFARE-MTT	\$137.58	1	\$137.58	11/13 ALASKA
CAR RENTAL-ANJ	\$76.50	1	\$76.50	08/22 ENTERPRISE
CAR RENTAL-ANJ	\$76.50	1	\$76.50	08/28 ENTERPRISE
CAR RENTAL-ANJ	\$76.50	1	\$76.50	09/18 ENTERPRISE
CAR RENTAL-ANJ	\$76.50	1	\$76.50	10/08 ENTERPRISE
CAR RENTAL-ANJ	\$76.50	1	\$76.50	10/10 ENTERPRISE
PER DIEM-ANJ	\$20.00	1	\$20.00	09/09 PER DIEM
PER DIEM-ANJ	\$20.00	1	\$20.00	09/18 PER DIEM
PER DIEM-ANJ	\$20.00	1	\$20.00	10/07 PER DIEM
Mainland Travel			\$4,347.46	
AIRFARE-MKP	-\$228.70	1	-\$228.70	11/05 HAWAIIAN REFUND
AIRFARE-CMJ	\$1,060.89	1	\$1,060.89	10/24 ALASKA
AIRFARE-CMJ	\$1,060.89	1	\$1,060.89	10/24 ALASKA
AIRFARE-CMJ	-\$1,060.89	1	-\$1,060.89	10/24 ALASKA REFUND
AIRFARE-ANJ	\$975.80	1	\$975.80	10/24 - ALASKA
AIRFARE-MKP	-\$228.70	1	-\$228.70	11/05 - HAWAIIAN
AIRFARE-MKP	\$1,161.37	1	\$1,161.37	10/20 - DELTA
AIRFARE-KRT	\$1,353.99	1	\$1,353.99	10/20 DELTA
AIRFARE-MKP	\$252.81	1	\$252.81	10/20 DELTA
Conferences			\$880.00	
REGISTRATION-CMJ	\$880.00	1	\$880.00	NACOLE CONFERENCE
REGISTRATION-ANJ	\$150.00	1	\$150.00	NACOLE CONFERENCE
REGISTRATION-MKP	\$855.00	1	\$855.00	NACOLE CONFERENCE
REGISTRATION-KRT & MKP	\$650.00	2	\$1,300.00	NRWC CONFERENCE
TOTAL			\$12,219.12	

** All expenses reflect posted transactions procured*

General Office Information

Mailing Address: Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission
235 S Beretania Street, 16th floor
Honolulu, HI 96813

Website: <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov>

Submit Testimony: <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/submit-testimony>

Email: hcsoc@hawaii.gov

Social Media: [YouTube](#)
[LinkedIn](#)
[Facebook](#)
[Instagram](#)

Monthly Meetings

This report will be discussed at the monthly Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission meeting on November 13, 2025. The next monthly meeting is scheduled to occur on December 11, 2025, at Leiopapa A. Kamehameha Building, 235 S. Beretania Street, Rom 204, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 or online via teleconference. More information can be found on the Commission's webpage here: <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/information>.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
AND REHABILITATION**
*Ka 'Oihana Ho'omalu Kalaima
a Ho'oponopono Ola*
1177 Alakea Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

October 13, 2025

TOMMY JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

Melanie Martin
Deputy Director
Administration

Vacant
Deputy Director
Correctional Institutions

Sanna Muñoz
Deputy Director
Rehabilitation Services
and
Programs

No. _____

ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION:

Mark Patterson, Chair
Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission
235 S. Beretania Street, 16th Floor
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

RE: Oahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC) September 2025 Site
Tour Observations

Dear Chair Patterson:

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) received the attached Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission's (HCSOC) September 2025 Site Tour Observations report and recommendations. (Enclosed). The DCR thanks the HCSOC for their efforts and our continued cooperative and collaborative working relationship. The purpose of this correspondence is to respond to comments and the recommendations contained in the report.

Medical Unit/Infirmary:

Response: *Module 3 has been identified as the new location of infirmary and is currently in the process of being cleaned and prepared to open.*

Holding Unit:

Response: *Exposure to natural outdoor sunlight, sky, clouds, wind, etc., is the objective. DCR may consider partial shading via a shading screen.*

Module 17:

Response: *Out-of-cell time has slightly increased, but due to lack of staff showing up for work consistently, DCR is unable to safely allow additional out of cell time. DCR is currently consulting with the Unit Public Workers (UPW) Union to implement a staff attendance program via Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).*

Visitation:

Response: *In addition to non-contact in person visitation, OCCC also provides GTL tablets to those in custody to facilitate video visits and telephone calls with family and friends on approved visitation list.*

The following addresses previous commendations:

NOTE: Follow up on previous recommendations in HCSOC report skip No. 3 and goes from number 2 to number 4.

1. Allow for Natural Light by Removing Wood Covering from all Cell Windows:

Response: *Facility is currently working to address this recommendation, including removing some of the wood covering to all for more natural light.*

2. Restoration of Contact Visits:

Response: *Under consideration.*

4. Expand Programming Opportunities: (left as how it is in the report)

Response: *Parts of OCCC are over 112 years old and are not designed for an abundance of rehabilitative, educational, treatment, or reentry programs. As a result, limited programs are provided, but due to staff calling out sick, programs are unfortunately often cancelled.*

5. Prioritize Kitchen Upgrades, Including Dishwasher Repair and Mold-Free Trays:

Response: *A new dishwasher and a water softener machine have been purchased. The Food Service Manager is currently attempting to coordinate installation with a plumber and an electrician. In addition, the facility previously purchased approximately 800 new trays and has ordered an additional 1,100 trays. The old trays with mold are sitting on a pallet awaiting pick up for disposal and destruction.*

6. Expand Furlough Utilization at OCCC:

Response: *At present, major construction improvement projects are underway at the Laumaka Work Furlough site to address safety and sanitation concerns.*

7. Install Shade for Recreation Cages in the Holding Unit:

Response: *Exposure to natural outdoor sunlight, sky, clouds, wind, etc., is the objective. DCR may consider partial shading via a shading screen.*

8. Investigate and Address Concerns from People in Custody at OCCC:

Response:

- **Roaches in Cells:**

Response: *Pest control contract in place and is being utilized.*

- **Difficulties in Accessing Bail Calls:**

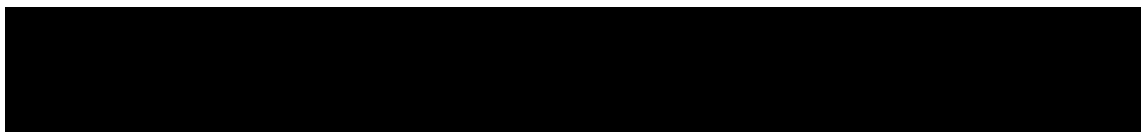
Response: *GTL tablets are readily available and allow free calls to bail bondsmen. Persons in custody can use the tablets to request assistance of family members with contacting a bail bondsman. Persons in custody requesting to utilize land line telephones to contact bail bondsmen are not necessary as the GTL tablets are readily available*

9. Ensure Regular Access to Books and Reading Material, Level Calls, and Recreation for Those in Holding Unit, including those in Disciplinary Segregation:

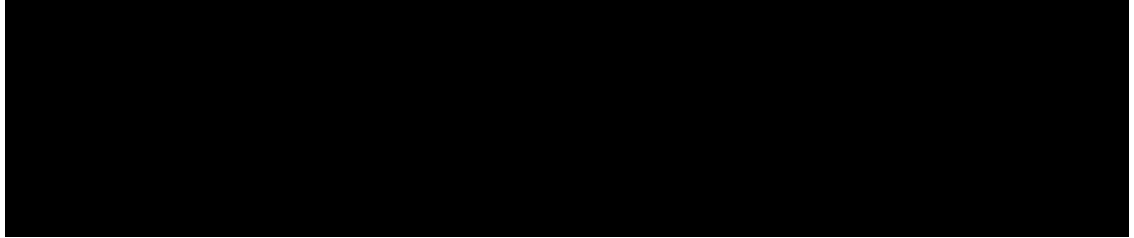
Response: *Reviewing current practices at OCCC to ensure compliance with departmental policies and procedures.*

Additional Recommendation to be Considered by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation:

1) Evaluate the Impacts of Requiring Post Closures to Limit Overtime Costs:



Mark Patterson, Chair HCSOC
Re: OCCC September 2025 Site Tour Observations
October 13, 2025
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Finally, thank you again for working cooperatively and collaboratively with the department as we continue to shift from what some may have seen as a punitive corrections model to one that is holistic, evidence based, and focuses on successful reintegration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tommy Johnson', is written above the printed name.

Tommy Johnson
Director

c: Dep-A Martin
Dep-R Muñoz
IDA Hoffman
Warden Schell

Enclosure



STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM OVERSIGHT COMMISSION
E HUIKALA A MA'EMA'E NŌ
235 S. Beretania Street, 16th Floor
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
(808) 587-4160

Oahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC)
September 2025 Site Tour Observations
Date of Report: September 17, 2025

On Wednesday, September 17, 2025, the Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission (the Commission, HCSOC) toured the Oahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC) collectively as a group. The tour included three of the five Commissioners – Chair Patterson, Commissioner Torney, and Commissioner Browning– in addition to the Oversight Coordinator, staff, and State House Representatives Della Au Belatti and Kim Coco Iwamoto. Commissioner Town was present for a meeting with Warden John Schell prior to the tour.

Meeting with Warden John Schell

The Commission and Representatives had the opportunity to meet with the OCCC Warden at the beginning of the tour which took the majority of the visit. One of the largest concerns noted by the Commission was consistent complaints received by people in custody at OCCC regarding lack of out-of-cell time. It is the Commission's understanding that this issue is specifically caused by restrictive overtime requirements that have been set at the Department level. The Warden explained that OCCC is required to close a minimum of 21 posts on any given watch before overtime can be authorized. The requirement to close 21 posts has resulted in consistent 23-hour lockdowns for general population custody levels. This prevents OCCC from providing regular access to out-of-cell time, including time out of cell for meals, showers, outdoor recreation, visits, phone or tablet time, and programming. The short and long-term impacts of trauma experienced by people in custody are also a concern given the conditions of confinement created by extended lockdowns.

The Warden and OCCC staff expressed serious concern regarding the potential liability generated from closing that many posts on a consistent basis as it creates terrible conditions of confinement. It is the Commission's opinion that **the cost of liability would likely outweigh any of the savings from reducing overtime costs.**

The Commission is deeply concerned regarding the lack of out-of-cell time for those in custody and views the relationship between restricting overtime and population management as a serious management failure on the Department level. Many of the solutions and recommendations that the Commission has put forward previously cannot be implemented at the facility level but must be implemented at the Department level.

Facility Highlights:

The Commission wishes to highlight several significant improvements OCCC has made, and key issues addressed over the past year:

1) Relocation of Women to the Women's Community Correctional Center

Women in custody have been relocated to the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC). This movement has significantly reduced overcrowding, reduced the opportunity for women in custody to be placed in compromising situations, and has provided the opportunity to expand medical and mental health programs for the male population at OCCC. Last year, OCCC had tentative plans to use Module 3 (30 cells) as the Health Care Infirmary and Module 2 (24 cells) as the step-down unit from Module 1 suicide watch and critical care for mentally ill people in custody. However, it does not appear that previous plans have been implemented.

2) Access to Confidential Policies

During the Commission's prior visit in August 2024, the Commission was surprised to learn that the Warden did not have access to the DCR "confidential" policies and procedures. Wardens are responsible for managing the facilities and upholding policies and procedures. Since August 2024, the DCR has made confidential policies accessible to Wardens, as recommended by the Commission.

Medical Unit/Infirmary

The Medical Unit was orderly and well-staffed. The physical space lacks privacy for medical practitioners who interview and examine people in custody, preventing what should be confidential medical communications. The infirmary is inadequate for a facility the size of OCCC, and the area completely lacks privacy.

Holding Unit

The Holding Unit was built in 1936 and, while functional, was clearly archaic. It is three stories with 12 cells on each floor. The front of the cells is made up of metal bars, not walls. Given the openness, there was no excessive noise detected. Thirty-nine (39) people in custody were housed in the Holding Unit—which has a maximum rated capacity of 60—with some double bunked. The unit was cold with some people in custody wrapped in their blankets to keep warm.

The outside recreation yard is made up of "cages" for a single individual. These cages, about double the size of a cell, do not have shaded areas to block the sun. It was reported by staff that about half the population in the holding unit take advantage of outdoor recreation time.



Module 17

During the Commission's visit, Module 17 housed approximately 49 people which was designed with a capacity of 48. The unit was under extremely high tension where nearly all people in custody, from behind their locked cells, were yelling complaints regarding not having daily access to showers, out-of-cell time, phone calls, programs, and outdoor recreation. This further highlights the importance of ensuring the population is managed to ensure appropriate conditions of confinement. High tensions such as these further the risk of inmate assaults, fights, suicides, staff assaults, use of force and other dangerous potentially avoidable situations for staff and people in custody.

Annex II

Annex II is a three-story concrete building divided into open bays on each floor, with dormitory-style housing that utilizes bunk beds. On the day of the Commission's visit, 134 men, were housed in this area, which was designed with a capacity of 114. People in custody progress through the unit, moving from the first to the second, and then to the third floor. No complaints were expressed from staff or people in custody in this unit.

Visitation:

The visiting area allows for only non-contact visits, preventing any physical contact between people in custody and their loved ones.

Follow-up on Previous Commission Recommendations

The Commission made the following recommendations following the HCSOC February 2023 tour, which have not yet been implemented. The Commission continues to recommend the following:

1) Allows for Natural Light by Removing Wood Covering from all Cell Windows

Replace wood-covered windows in housing units with to allow natural light, in line with ACA standards. Although some wood coverings have been removed over the past year, wood coverings do still remain on some cell windows. According to ACA Standard 4-ALDF-1A-16, *all inmate rooms/cells must provide occupants with access to natural light through at least three square feet of transparent glazing, plus two additional square feet per inmate in rooms/cells housing three or more individuals*. Therefore, the Commission recommends OCCC continue replacing wood coverings to ensure all cell windows in all modules allow natural light. Compliance with the ACA standards is of particular importance with OCCC moving toward ACA accreditation.

2) Restoration of Contact Visits

OCCC has not offered in-person contact visits for five years, initially due to COVID-19. Extensive research underscores the importance and rehabilitative benefits of contact visits for those in custody, as these visits allow individuals to maintain closer connections with their loved ones and communities. The Commission therefore continues to recommend OCCC reinstate contact visits.

4) Expand Programming Opportunities

People in custody at OCCC have too much idle time and limited access to programming, including cultural, education, and reentry preparation. The Commission recommends expanding programming opportunities and community partnerships to reduce idle time and increase programming opportunities. While the facility has made some progress in this area, it is essential to continue and be innovative (even within limited space) to support people in custody and also gain community support and trust.

5) Prioritize Kitchen Upgrades, Including Dishwasher Repair and Mold-Free Trays

The kitchen at OCCC is in dire need of updates to ensure sanitary conditions for staff and the kitchen workline, and to provide safe food for the entire facility. Urgent repairs are needed for the dishwasher, along with replacement of ceiling and floor tiles, rusted appliances, and food service trays. Although there are plans for a new facility, these conditions cannot wait until then and must be addressed immediately.

6) Expand Furlough Utilization at OCCC

Although OCCC has the highest furlough participation and occupancy rate in comparison to the other three jails, there is still the opportunity to increase furlough participation at OCCC. Identifying and addressing the roadblocks to furlough is crucial to allow more

individuals to benefit from these programs and move through the correctional system. The Commission recommends that DCR assess, identify, and resolve systemic issues around furlough participation. The Commission would like to see furlough occupancy rates near 100% as it significantly increases the chances of success post-release.

7) Install Shade for Recreation Cages in the Holding Unit

The recreation area outside the Holding Unit consists of individual cages, which currently lack shaded areas to protect people in custody from the sun. The Commission recommends installing shade structures, even tarps, to provide protection from sun exposure.

8) Investigate and Address Concerns from People in Custody at OCCC

The Commission has received multiple complaints regarding the following issues at OCCC:

- **Roaches in Cells:** Roaches are present in the cells. This poses a health and sanitation concern. **The Commission recommends implementing a pest control plan that effectively and safely eliminates the roach population.**
- **Difficulties in Accessing Bail Calls:** The Commission learned that some individuals have experienced delays of several weeks in accessing bail calls, which has prevented those who could make bail from being released. This delay not only impacts individual rights but also contributes to overcrowding. The Commission urges the facility to establish and confirm a reliable system that allows timely access to bail calls for all eligible individuals and **ensure all people in custody have prompt access to bail calls.**

9) Ensure Regular Access to Books and Reading Material, Legal Calls, Mail, and Recreation for Those in Holding Unit, including those in Disciplinary Segregation

People in custody in the holding unit at OCCC reported irregular access to legal calls and daily recreation, and inconsistent mail service, along with no books or reading material. ACA standards require the following access for people in disciplinary segregation:

Mail: Inmates in Restrictive Housing can write and receive letters on the same basis as inmates in the general population.

Source: American Correctional Association (ACA) Performance-Based Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions, 5th ed., March 2021, 4B Restrictive Housing, 5-ACI-4B-20, p. 128.

Access to Legal and Reading Materials: Inmates in Restrictive Housing have access to reading materials.

Source: American Correctional Association (ACA) Performance-Based Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions, 5th ed., March 2021, 4B Restrictive Housing, 5-ACI-4B-23, p. 129.

Exercise Out of Cell: Inmates in Restrictive Housing receive a minimum of one hour of exercise outside their cells, five days per week, unless security or safety considerations dictate otherwise."

Source: American Correctional Association (ACA) Performance-Based Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions, 5th ed., March 2021, 4B Restrictive Housing, 5-ACI-4B-24, p. 129.

Telephone Privileges: Inmates in Restrictive Housing are allowed at minimum telephone privileges to access the judicial process and family emergencies as determined by the facility administrator or designee unless security or safety considerations dictate otherwise.

Source: American Correctional Association (ACA) Performance-Based Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions, 5th ed., March 2021, 4B Restrictive Housing, 5-ACI-4B-25, p. 129.

Access to Programs: Inmates in Extended Restrictive Housing have access to programs and services that include but are not limited to the following: educational services, commissary services, library services, social services, behavioral health and treatment services, religious guidance, and recreational programs.

Source: American Correctional Association (ACA) Performance-Based Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions, 5th ed., March 2021, 4B Restrictive Housing, 5-ACI-4B-26, p. 130.

Additional Recommendations to be Considered by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation:

1) Evaluate the Impacts of Requiring Post Closures to Limit Overtime Costs

The Department needs to seriously consider how requiring post closures to limit overtime impacts daily access to showers, out-of-cell time, outdoor recreation, programming and general conditions of confinement. The Department should allow Wardens to make these decisions as they should know the needs of their facilities the best. Additionally, the Department should consider holding regular inter-divisional meetings between Division Administrators to evaluate the fiscal and humanitarian impacts of requiring post closures before authorizing overtime.

The Commission extends special thanks to the OCCC staff for their time, professionalism, and expertise during the tour.