

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**HAWAII CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM OVERSIGHT COMMISSION**  
**E HUIKALA A MA'EMA'E NŌ**  
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**MARK PATTERSON**  
CHAIR

**CHRISTIN M. JOHNSON**  
OVERSIGHT COORDINATOR

COMMISSIONERS  
**HON. R. MARK BROWNING (ret.)**

**HON. RONALD IBARRA (ret.)**

**MARTHA TORNEY**

**HON. MICHAEL A. TOWN (ret.)**

## Parental Leave Transition Plan

Oversight Coordinator

Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission

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### Executive Summary

This transition plan establishes operational continuity for the Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission during the parental leave of the Oversight Coordinator. This plan:

- Defines leadership coverage and decision authority
- Identifies core operational responsibilities by staff role
- Establishes clear escalation pathways
- Provides operational guidance so staff and Commissioners can operate effectively without contacting the Oversight Coordinator during leave

The objective is to maintain continuity of statutory responsibilities under Hawaii Revised Statutes Chapter 353L while ensuring that staff remain empowered to perform their duties and that Commissioners can provide limited operational support when necessary.

The Oversight Coordinator will be on parental leave for approximately 12 weeks beginning upon the birth of the child [REDACTED]. The Oversight Coordinator may be out longer if the baby comes preterm, or if there are other unexpected medical concerns.

The Commissioners function primarily as a policy-setting and oversight body, while operational management of the office is conducted by the Oversight Coordinator and staff. However, during this period:

- No Acting Oversight Coordinator will be formally designated.
- Two commissioners will provide limited operational oversight:
  - Chair Mark Patterson, focusing on investigative oversight
  - Commissioner Martha Torney, focusing on administrative and operational oversight.

The Oversight Coordinator will only be contacted in true emergencies after escalation through Commissioners.

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## Duration and Scope of Leave

**Anticipated start:** Upon birth of child [REDACTED]

**Expected duration:**

- Standard leave: 12 weeks

**Availability During Leave**

The Oversight Coordinator will operate under the following availability model:

- Emergency contact only
  - All issues must first be escalated through Commissioners
  - The Oversight Coordinator will only be contacted if Commissioners determine it is necessary, or if Commissioners cannot be reached in timely manner given situation.
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## Leadership Coverage Structure

Temporary operational support will be provided by Commissioners.

**Operational Commissioners**

<b>Commissioner</b>	<b>Area of Responsibility</b>
Mark Patterson (Chair)	Investigative oversight
Martha Torney	Administrative and operational oversight

Commissioners will conduct weekly check-ins with staff and provide guidance as needed. Staff remain responsible for day-to-day operational execution.

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## Functional Responsibilities by Employee Group

**Investigative Oversight**

The Jail and Prison Oversight Specialists conduct investigations that involve individual and systemic complaints related to the correctional system. The Jail and Prison Oversight Specialists interact regularly with the employees of, and people incarcerated by, the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

**Core Activities**

Investigations

- Complaint intake and logging
- Preliminary complaint review
- Facility interviews
- Documentation review
- Investigation findings
- Closing letters to complainants

- Addressing backlog of complaints

#### Report Writing

- Oversight Coordinator monthly report (*detailed expectations below*)

#### Death in Custody Tracking

- Review of all death in custody P1's
- Description of deaths for OC report
- Request for autopsy reports
- Documentation of incoming autopsy reports and/or other documentation related to death

### **Administrative Operations**

Administrative functions are primarily coordinated by the Special Assistant to the Oversight Coordinator.

#### **Core Responsibilities**

- Letter intake logging
- Budget tracking
- Commission meeting logistics
- Travel coordination
- Public meeting notice postings
- Meeting minutes preparation

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## Investigation Closure Checklist

During leave, Oversight Specialists must continue to work on cases consistently. Do not wait for permission to move forward or request applicable information on cases.

A case may move to a closing letter if:

1. Interview with complainant completed (if possible)
2. Relevant documentation requested from DCR, reviewed and documented thoroughly
3. Any facility clarification requested
4. Investigator reached a clear finding
5. Draft letter written and sent to Chair Patterson for review

## Monthly Oversight Coordinator Report Process

### The Oversight Coordinator report must be submitted to:

- the Commission
- the Governor
- the Legislature
- the Legislative Reference Bureau (LRB)
- the Public via OIP process and HCSOC website

### Drafting process:

1. Special Assistant to Oversight Coordinator distributes draft template to staff on last week of each month.
  1. April Report, published in May – distribute to staff on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026
  2. May Report, published in June - distribute to staff on May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026
  3. June Report, published in July - distribute to staff on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026
  4. July Report, published in August - distribute to staff on July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026
2. Each staff member submits updates directly to report.
  1. April Report, published in May – Submissions complete by April 30, 2026
  2. May Report, published in June - Submissions complete by May 29, 2026
  3. June Report, published in July - Submissions complete by June 30, 2026
  4. July Report, published in August - Submissions complete July 31, 2026
  - Oversight Specialists must include:
    - Deaths in custody which occurred in the past month
    - Any tours conducted with Commissioners or other important stakeholders. (*Commissioners should lead any tours with legislators, judiciary, prosecutors, etc. However, Specialists are expected to assist with write ups*)
    - Any applicable events attended (family day, resource fair, court graduations, etc.)
    - Breakdown of complaints received by Commission – Jail Oversight Specialist will be lead of this section
    - Findings on lack of movement throughout the system – Prison Oversight Specialist will be lead of this section
  - Special Assistant to Oversight Coordinator must include:
    - Introduction
    - Past meetings
    - Expenses for preceding month
    - General office information
    - Monthly meeting information

3. Special Assistant to the Oversight Coordinator reviews for completeness and consistent formatting. Sends to Commissioner Torney for review and approval.
  1. April Report, published in May – Review and submission to Commissioner Torney complete by May 1, 2026
  2. May Report, published in June - Review and submission to Commissioner Torney complete by June 1, 2026
  3. June Report, published in July - Review and submission to Commissioner Torney complete by July 1, 2026
  4. July Report, published in August - Review and submission to Commissioner Torney complete by August 1, 2026
4. Special Assistant to the Oversight Coordinator finalizes and submits draft report to Commission and to Department (Director Johnson). Draft must be circulated **one week prior to public posting**.
  1. April Report, published in May – Draft report submitted to DCR by May 4, 2026
  2. May Report, published in June - Draft report submitted to DCR by June 2, 2026
  3. June Report, published in July - Draft report submitted to DCR by July 1, 2026
  4. July Report, published in August - Draft report submitted to DCR by August 3, 2026
5. Special Assistant to Oversight Coordinator addresses any requested amendments by Commissioners or requests Oversight Specialists to address as appropriate. **If DCR requests amendments, send to Chair Patterson and Commissioner Torney for consideration.**
6. Special Assistant to the Oversight Coordinator follows regular process to post report publicly and distribute to Governor, legislature, and other stakeholders.
  1. April Report, published in May – Publicly post final report by May 8, 2026
  2. May Report, published in June - Publicly post final report by June 5, 2026
  3. June Report, published in July - Publicly post final report by July 2, 2026
  4. July Report, published in August - Publicly post final report by August 7, 2026

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## Facility Specific Report Process

After each monthly Commission meeting, Commissioners and staff complete a site inspection of an applicable facility. These are annual inspections completed by the Commissioners and all focus areas should be led by Commissioners. Staff are expected to put together facility-specific reports based on Commissioner priorities and observations. All facility-specific reports can be viewed here: <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/facility-specific-reports/> Applicable facility-specific reports should be reviewed by the Oversight Specialists before touring to get a general sense of past priorities and recommendations.

During leave, the Jail Oversight Specialist will be the lead of the facility-specific reports as jails are going to be toured first. The schedule is as follows:

17-Apr-26	Kaua'i	Kauai Community Correctional Center
7-May-26	Hawai'i	Hawaii Community Correctional Center
11-Jun-26	Maui	Maui Community Correctional Center
9-Jul-26	O'ahu	Oahu Community Correctional Center
13-Aug-26	O'ahu	<i>break</i>
10-Sep-26	O'ahu	Women's Community Correctional Center
8-Oct-26	O'ahu	Halawa Correctional Facility
12-Nov-26	Hawai'i	Kulani Correctional Facility
10-Dec-26	O'ahu	Waiawa Correctional Facility

**Facility specific reports must be submitted to:**

- the Commission
- the Governor
- the Legislature
- the Public via OIP process and HCSOC website

**Drafting process:**

1. Applicable Oversight Specialist (depending if report is on a jail or prison) will draft initial report the immediate week following the site inspection. It is fine to create a copy of the previous facility-specific report to use as a template. All information in the report should be pulled from the Commissioners (either by their written notes or via phone call with them)
2. Applicable Oversight Specialist will share draft report with team for immediate edits/feedback.
3. Applicable Oversight Specialist will share draft report with Commissioners at least two weeks prior to **posting date**. Facility specific report should follow same dates as the OC report when it comes to sharing with Commissioners, Department, and posting publicly.
4. Special Assistant to the Oversight Coordinator will handle final review of report for grammar and consistency and follow regular process to post report publicly and distribute to the Governor, legislature, and other stakeholders.

**Keep in Mind:**

1. Every report must answer:
    - What is happening?
    - Why does it matter?
    - What should be done?
  
  2. Findings must be actionable
    - Observations alone are insufficient
    - Each major issue should lead to:
      - A recommendation
      - Or a clearly implied intervention
  
  3. Credibility comes from:
    - Specificity (not vague claims)
    - Repetition of observed patterns across facilities or prior inspections
    - Alignment with statutory authority and oversight role
  
  4. Audience awareness is critical  
Primary audiences:
    - Legislature
    - Governor
    - Corrections leadership
    - Public stakeholders  
Reports must be:
    - Persuasive but factual
    - Accessible to non-experts (avoid jargon)
    - Structured for quick policy digestion (brief, to the point)
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## Operational Escalation Log

In the shared drive, there is an excel document titled, “Operational Escalation Log – OC Leave 2026.” This log should be utilized any time an issue needs to be escalated to Commissioners. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- DCR refusing or delaying records
- media inquiries
- potential political issues
- commissioner guidance requests
- internal capacity problems
- legal sensitive information (*route to assigned Deputy Attorney General, Charles Lee*)

Staff should note the date of escalation, brief description of the issue (examples above), staff lead (who is requesting escalation), who the issue is escalated to (Chair Patterson, Commissioner Torney, or DAG), status of request (pending, response received, etc.), and any applicable notes important to the issue. Staff should keep entries factual and avoid speculation, characterizations, or unnecessary commentary about individuals.

This is to help staff track issues they need Commissioner assistance on, and to ensure that Commissioners do not become overwhelmed with tracking requests. It is the staff's responsibility to follow up if guidance or clarity is still needed.

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## Decision Authority Matrix

### Financial Authority

<b>Amount</b>	<b>Approval Authority</b>
Under \$500	Special Assistant to Oversight Coordinator
\$500–\$1,500	Commissioner Martha Torney
Above \$1,500	Full Commission

Note: Pre-approved spending may proceed without additional authorization.

### Investigative Authority

<b>Decision</b>	<b>Authority</b>
Opening investigations	Oversight Specialists
Facility visits	Oversight Specialists
Findings letter approval	Chair Mark Patterson
Sensitive investigations with credible findings	Immediate notification to Chair

Sensitive cases include:

- Staff misconduct
- Concerning use of force
- Civil rights allegations
- Death in custody
- Medical or mental health neglect allegations

## Public Communications

<b>Action</b>	<b>Authority</b>
Media inquiries	Chair Patterson or designated Commissioner
Public statements	Chair Patterson with Commission approval
Legislative Testimony	Chair Patterson with Commission approval
Legislative Inquiries	Chair Patterson or designated Commissioner
State Agency Inquires (including Gov's Office)	Chair Patterson or designated Commissioner

## Public Records Requests

Process:

1. Intake handled by Special Assistant to Oversight Coordinator
2. Response reviewed by DAG Charles Lee
3. Response approval by Commissioner Martha Torney

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## Commissioner Engagement Protocol

### Weekly Check-Ins

Chair Patterson and Commissioner Torney will conduct weekly operational meetings with staff. Check-ins will be in compliance with HRS section 92-2.5.

### Staff will:

- prepare written updates
- provide verbal briefings
- present agenda items requiring guidance
  - investigative strategy
  - report wording
  - policy interpretation

### Agenda Development

Staff set the meeting agenda based on:

- current investigations
- current projects
- timeline updates (especially for OC report)
- operational issues
- requests for Commissioner guidance

## Communication Boundaries

### Staff may contact:

- Chair Patterson
- Commissioner Torney

Other commissioners should not be contacted for any operational matters.

### Special Assistant to the Oversight Coordinator may contact:

- HR Director, Barb Nitta at [barbara.k.nitta@hawaii.gov](mailto:barbara.k.nitta@hawaii.gov)
- HCSOC DAG, Charles Lee at [charles.jm.lee@hawaii.gov](mailto:charles.jm.lee@hawaii.gov)

Other staff should not contact HR Director or HCSOC DAG for any operational matters unless specifically instructed to by Chair Patterson or Commissioner Torney. Both should be cc'd on any correspondence with HR Director or HCSOC DAG.

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## Escalation & Emergency Framework

### Escalation Order

1. Chair Mark Patterson
2. Commissioner Martha Torney
3. Oversight Coordinator (emergency only)

The Oversight Coordinator will receive written summaries of major incidents from applicable staff members.

### DCR Access Issues/Concerns

While the Oversight Coordinator is on leave, there is a possibility that the Department will delay or deny information/documentation requests. This must be rectified expeditiously as the HCSOC cannot be effective or impactful without its access to DCR records and facilities.

### Mitigation:

- Oversight Specialists should escalate delays or denials in requests for information or access to facilities immediately to Chair Patterson and Commissioner Torney with written explanation of delay and who is causing delay.
    - Oversight Coordinator should be cc'd on the written explanation.
  - Chair Patterson or Commissioner Torney contact Director Johnson to rectify issue immediately.
  - If Director Johnson is not addressing issue, escalate to HCSOC DAG, Charles Lee. This should be done by Commissioners.
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## Communication Plan for Parental Leave

### Internal Communication

Staff will be informed of this plan through:

- written notice
- team meeting to review procedures and answer questions.

### External Communication

Once leave commences, the Commission Chair will notify:

- Office of the Governor of Hawaii
- Hawaii State Legislature
- Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

Notification will be made via formal correspondence. Draft letters are available in shared drive. Special Assistant to the Oversight Coordinator will help with drafting, gathering signatures, and distribution of letters.

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## Implementation Timeline

Stage	Timing
Plan review by Commissioners	Prior to leave
Final approval	Oversight Coordinator
Operational transition	First day of leave
Weekly check-ins begin	First week of leave

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## Conclusion

This transition plan provides a clear operational framework to ensure that the work of the Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission continues effectively during the Oversight Coordinator's parental leave.

Through clearly defined decision authority, structured Commissioner engagement, and staff-driven operational management, the Commission can continue fulfilling its statutory responsibilities while supporting the Oversight Coordinator's leave.