

PERFORMANCE AUDIT

Oversight of Crossroads Correctional Center

Department of Corrections

NOVEMBER 2016

15P-03

REPORT SUMMARY

The Department of Corrections exercises oversight of the operation and management of Montana's private prison, Crossroads Correctional Center. The department paid the contractor over \$15.6 million for use of this facility in fiscal year 2016 for the housing of state inmates at CCC. Although the contractor houses state inmates according to contract requirements in most of the areas reviewed, the department should enhance its oversight, particularly in the areas of security staffing, health services, and food service.

Context

The Department of Corrections (department) assigns offenders to correctional facilities and programs throughout the state. About 17 percent of the 15,413 adult offenders under department supervision at the end of fiscal year 2014 were in prison, as opposed to placement in community corrections programs or other custody or supervision. One of the prisons housing offenders in the state's custody is the privately operated prison in Shelby, Crossroads Correctional Center (CCC). This facility currently houses around 600 of the approximately 2,600 state inmates. A contract between the department and the private contractor defines the requirements for incarceration conditions at the facility. The department is responsible for ensuring CCC inmates are housed according to contract requirements and applicable correctional standards. The primary mechanisms used by the department to monitor conditions at CCC are an on-site contract monitor, an annual licensing process, and an inmate grievance system. The department also relies on other processes for monitoring the facility, such as local inspections and independent accreditations by the American Correctional Association and the National Commission on Correctional Health Care.

Concerns about conditions at CCC have been expressed to legislators by members of the public. To address these concerns and to determine the need to conduct further audit work, we administered a survey to former CCC inmates. Survey results identified four prison condition areas warranting further audit work:

- ◆ Prison staffing
- ◆ Health services
- ◆ Food service
- ◆ Housing unit temperature

Audit work was conducted in each of these four areas to determine if issues existed and whether the monitoring by the department in these areas was sufficient.

Results

Our audit work determined the contractor generally meets contract requirements in the areas of staffing levels, food service, health services, and housing unit temperature. While the department has oversight in these areas, our work identified limitations to this oversight that increase the risk for

potential issues at CCC going undetected by the department. While no deficiencies in the oversight of housing unit temperature were found, the audit report makes three recommendations to improve department oversight of operations at CCC in the other areas. These recommendations relate to enhancing department oversight by:

- ◆ Defining expectations for monitoring activities at CCC in the areas of staffing, health services, and food service, including the nature, extent, frequency, and documentation of these activities.
- ◆ Analyzing health services data from CCC and making comparisons with a similar public correctional facility.
- ◆ Requiring regular reviews of the CCC menu by an independent nutritionist and enforcing the implementation of recommended improvements.

Recommendation Concurrence	
Concur	3
Partially Concur	0
Do Not Concur	0
Source: Agency audit response included in final report.	

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