



STATE OF WISCONSIN

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Janice Mueller  
State Auditor

DATE: December 12, 2007

TO: Senator Jim Sullivan and  
Representative Suzanne Jeskewitz, Co-chairpersons  
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

FROM: Janice Mueller *Janice Mueller*  
State Auditor

SUBJECT: Proposed Audit of the Treatment of Adult Inmates with Mental Illnesses in  
the Wisconsin Corrections System—Background Information

At your request, we have gathered some background information the Joint Legislative Audit Committee may find useful in considering an audit of the treatment of adult inmates with mental illnesses in the Wisconsin corrections system, including the facilities operated by both the Department of Corrections and the Department of Health and Family Services.

Adult inmates in the custody of the Department of Corrections are housed in 20 correctional facilities and at 16 correctional centers, all of which are overseen by the Division of Adult Institutions. The Division's Bureau of Health Services oversees and coordinates the provision of health care services delivered at the institutions and the development of programs for care delivery, pharmacy services, and medical records management. The Bureau also monitors contractual health services. The Bureau's fiscal year (FY) 2006-07 budget was \$57.0 million and included 124.46 full-time equivalent staff. Other health and psychological services staff are included in the budget for each institution.

The Wisconsin Resource Center, which is overseen by the Department of Health and Family Services in partnership with the Department of Corrections, provides specialized mental health services. The Center is a prison that houses male inmates transferred from other adult institutions and provides treatment for sexually violent persons detained or committed under Chapter 980, Wis. Stats. In FY 2006-07, expenditures at the Center totaled \$38.0 million and the average daily population included 340 inmates and 75 sexually violent persons. The FY 2007-08 budget is \$40.8 million and the population is projected to include 311 inmates and 146 sexually violent persons.

The Winnebago Mental Health Institute, which is overseen by the Department of Health and Family Services, provides care to female inmates who require more intensive treatment than can be provided at Taycheedah, the adult institution housing female prisoners. Expenditures and inmate population information were not readily available.

We noted a number of concerns with inmate mental health services in our 2001 report, *An Evaluation of Prison Health Care* (report 01-9). For example, the number of psychiatric prescriptions was growing at a faster rate than the number of inmates. We also noted that the availability of psychiatric services, including medication monitoring, varied among the institutions.

An audit of the treatment of adult inmates with mental illnesses could update the mental health care portion of report 01-9 and include the following:

- an analysis of expenditures, including staffing costs at each institution and the cost and type of psychotropic medications;
- a review of how the Department of Corrections identifies inmates with mental illnesses, including those who are sexually violent persons;
- a comparison of inmates and practices by correctional institution, including:
  - the number of inmates with mental illnesses;
  - treatment practices, including who distributes medications; and
  - the housing of inmates with mental illnesses, including the number in segregation;
- an assessment of compliance with laws and policies related to inmate and employee safety, including a review of the incidents of assaults involving inmates with mental illnesses;
- a review of departmental efforts to assess performance relative to national standards for mental health care; and
- a comparison of Wisconsin's practices for the delivery of mental health services to inmates with those of other midwestern states, including the identification of best practices.

I hope you find this information helpful. If you have any additional questions, please contact me.

JM/KW/kc

cc: Senator Julie Lassa  
Senator Mark Miller  
Senator Alan Lasee  
Senator Robert Cowles

Representative Samantha Kerkman  
Representative Kitty Rhoades  
Representative David Cullen  
Representative Joe Parisi

Rick Raemisch, Secretary  
Department of Corrections

Kevin Hayden, Secretary  
Department of Health and Family Services