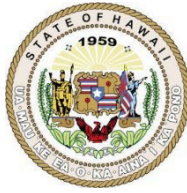


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



MARK PATTERSON
CHAIR

DEPT. COMM. NO. 115
CHRISTIN M. JOHNSON
OVERSIGHT COORDINATOR

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

COMMISSIONERS
HON. R. MARK BROWNING (ret.)

HON. RONALD IBARRA (ret.)

MARTHA TORNEY

HON. MICHAEL A. TOWN (ret.)

June 6, 2025

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President and Members of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 409
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura
Speaker and Members of the
House of Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 431
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear President Kouchi, Speaker Nakamura, and Members of the Legislature:

In accordance with Chapter 353L-6, I am submitting the monthly Oversight Coordinator Report for the month of May. This report includes actions taken by the Commission and expenses for the preceding month. Also included is the Commission's facility report of the Kauai Community Correctional Center. These reports may be reviewed electronically at <http://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/reports>.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call me at 808-900-2200.

Respectfully,

Christin Johnson
Oversight Coordinator

c: Governor's Office
Legislative Reference Bureau Library (1 hard copy)

Enclosure



Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission

Monthly Oversight Coordinator Report – May 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) **Late Notice:**¹ On April 12, 2025, at approximately 1:03am, a 24-year-old Hawaiian male in custody was found unresponsive at Halawa Correctional Facility. 911 Emergency Services was called and ACOs immediately administered CPR. At approximately 2:01am, EMS arrived and continued to administer CPR until approximately 2:28am when the individual was unfortunately pronounced deceased. The incident appears to be a suicide, which is the first apparent suicide this year. The medical examiner will determine the official cause of death following an autopsy, which includes toxicology testing.
- 2) On May 17, 2025, at approximately 6:50am, a 29-year-old Micronesian male in custody was found unresponsive at the Halawa Correctional Facility. The responding ACO immediately cut the noose and administered CPR while 911 Emergency Services was called. At approximately 7:17am, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel arrived at the facility. Unfortunately, at 7:54am, the individual was pronounced deceased. The incident appears to be a suicide, which is the second apparent suicide this year. The medical examiner will determine the official cause of death following an autopsy, which includes toxicology testing.
- 3) On May 29, 2025, at approximately 10:12 am, DCR was notified that a 37-year-old Hawaiian male in custody was pronounced deceased while hospitalized at Pali Momi Hospital in the ICU. The deceased was in the custody of the Halawa Correctional Facility and was hospitalized after staff found him in his cell on May 27, 2025, under the influence of an unknown substance. CPR was conducted until

¹ The Department notified the Commission in a timely manner, however, the Commission accidentally left the information out of last month's report.

EMS arrived and transported the individual to the hospital. The medical examiner will determine the official cause of death following an autopsy, which includes toxicology testing.

Tours

Hope Center Ministries Kailua

On May 20, 2025, Commission staff visited Hope Center Ministries in Kailua, a deeply spiritual and uplifting faith-based residential recovery program. The center offers a structured 12-month model that includes 24/7 peer-led support, vocational training, and court liaison services. It provides a supportive pathway for men transitioning from incarceration or homelessness and is soon expanding to welcome women. This visit highlighted the program's powerful role in helping individuals begin their healing journey and rebuild their lives with purpose and faith.

Hawaii State Hospital Resource Fair & Blessing of Kahua Ola

On May 30, 2025, Commission staff attended the Hawai'i State Hospital Resource Fair, which began with a cultural blessing at Kahua Ola – a transitional housing space on campus where residents live independently as they prepare to return to the community. The blessing included traditional Hawaiian practices using pa'akai and wai, setting the tone for the day. The fair featured community vendors like the Institute for Human Services (HIS) and Project Vision, music by patients, and activities such as sand art and plant medicine education. The event highlighted the healing environment at the Hawaii State Hospital and helped reduce stigma around mental health by showcasing patient talent, recovery, and community integration.



This is a photo of the sand art that everyone at the event participated in creating. It was a meaning opportunity for everyone – patients, volunteers, guests, and providers – to com together and work on a single project. The sand art was designed and run by the art teacher at the Hawaii State Hospital.

Events Attended

Halawa Correctional Facility Graduation Ceremony

On May 8, 2025, Commission staff attended a graduation ceremony at Halawa Correctional Facility, where nine incarcerated men received their Associate of Arts degrees in Business from Chaminade University. The event, filled with emotion and support from families, DCR, and Chaminade staff, highlighted the power of education. A special moment was held for a graduate in Protective Custody, who had to be separated from other graduates and people in custody, to ensure he was also celebrated. The day was a reminder that education can spark hope and transformation within a prison setting.

Hale Nani Resource Fair

On May 15, 2025, Commission staff attended a reintegration resource fair at Hale Nani Correctional Facility, where 26 justice-involved individuals prepared for reentry by connecting with community organizations offering services such as job training, DMV support, and housing resources. This was the first event of its kind held at Hale Nani. The event was well received, with participants expressing appreciation for the opportunity to learn about vocational training, financial literacy, and dental support. The fair created a positive environment for collaboration and highlighted the importance of continued efforts to bring meaningful, participant-centered reentry support to Hale Nani. DCR is also planning a resource fair to be held at HCCC (main) soon.

NACOLE's Quarterly Forum for Jail and Prison Oversight

On May 20, 2025, Commission staff attended the National Association for Civilian Oversight Law Enforcement's (NACOLE) Quarterly Forum for Jail and Prison Oversight. This virtual event focused on the future of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) in light of recent federal budget cuts. National Advocacy Director of Just Detention International, Julie Abate, was the primary speaker of the event. In addition to presenting on the uncertain future of federal funding for PREA, Julie provided PREA training resources and a blueprint for the vicarious trauma-informed organization.

Presentation to the Annual Office of the Public Defender Training Seminar

On May 23, 2025, the Commission's Chair and Oversight Coordinator presented to a large group of public defenders during the Annual Office of the Public Defender Training Seminar. The presentation covered an overview of oversight, a brief history of the Commission and the work the Commission prioritizes today, and the current state of the system to highlight the importance of the Office of the Public Defender and its work. Afterwards, the Chair and Oversight Coordinator took questions and shared insights from touring the correctional facilities. The Commission thanks the First Deputy Public Defender, Hayley Y.C. Cheng, for the warm invitation and opportunity to present.

Projects

Complaint Management

After completing a robust orientation to the Hawaii correctional system, Commission staff began the process of building a tracking system to track and monitor more than 200 backlogged letters received from people in custody, DCR staff, and various stakeholders. The tracking system has been optimized for resolving the backlog of letters and helping HCSOC reach operational capacity as quickly as possible. This will ensure people in custody, DCR staff, and stakeholders concerns are met with timely responses. The tracking system has also been designed to be easily integrated with a case management system, which the Commission received funding for fiscal year 2026. This will greatly improve HCSOC's ability to track, monitor, investigate, and respond to incoming complaints.

Published Reports

Hawaii Community Correctional Center (HCCC) Site Visit Observations

On May 8, 2025, the Commission released its Site Visit Observation Report on the April 10, 2025 tour of the Hawaii Community Correctional Center (HCCC). The tour included Chair Mark Patterson, Commissioner Martha Torney, Commissioner Ron Ibarra, Commissioner Mark Browning, and Commission staff.

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

Recommendations to be considered by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation:

The Commission restates and urges DCR to adopt the following prior recommendations:

1) Expand Furlough Utilization at HCCC

Currently, 12 men are in the HCCC furlough program despite the capacity to accommodate up to 50 participants. Identifying and addressing the roadblocks to furlough is crucial to allow more individuals to benefit from these programs and move through the correctional system. While the Commission acknowledges that custody status is not the only factor in furlough determinations, it is a significant one. Notably, 15 individuals at Kulani Correctional Facility have community status, which is required for furlough. It is important to note that this has improved from last year's count (34), however the Commission recognizes that it is important to examine why more people in custody in community status are not in furlough at HCCC or other sites.

2) Optimize New Housing Unit Utilization

The new housing unit, Kaumana, should be assessed and utilized to balance current housing priorities and serve the needs of different populations. This includes decreasing overcrowding, especially in Punahale, better serving vulnerable populations, including the mental health population, creating a proper space for women, and allowing for necessary facility maintenance. With the completion of the new housing unit, it's crucial to consider how it can support the largest issues within the facility.

During the Commission's talk stories with HCCC staff, many recommended moving the mental health population to the new unit, transforming it into a dedicated mental health housing unit. The new unit includes suicide-resistant features, group space, and recreational areas suitable for this population. This move would help decrease overcrowding in Punahale, create more space for women in the main facility, and relocate others from inadequate spaces, significantly improving living conditions.

It should be noted that even with the addition of these 24 new cells, accommodating up to 48 more people, the true jail population will still exceed capacity, necessitating continued population reduction efforts.

3) Reduce Overcrowding through System-wide Population Reduction Efforts

The most significant issue at HCCC remains overcrowding, particularly in Punahale, where vulnerable populations, such as those with acute mental illness and severe health issues, as well as new admissions, are housed. Even with the opening of the new unit, the facility will remain overcrowded. Addressing this requires a State and Third Circuit-wide priority on safely reducing the jail population. DCR alone cannot resolve this issue; instead, it must involve a coordinated system-wide effort.

All justice partners, including the Judiciary, Office of the Public Defender, Office of the Prosecuting Attorney, Probation, the Department of Health, and Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, must work both individually and collectively to safely reduce the jail population. On Hawaii Island, a coordinated approach is essential.

- A. Further Diversion Initiatives.** The Commission supports ongoing and new diversion initiatives on Hawaii Island to address the needs of justice-involved individuals. The Commission is aware that this is in process and supports the furtherance of these and other diversion initiatives.
- B. Work Together to Reduce Pretrial Time.** Consider a Third Circuit-wide goal – Judiciary, Prosecutor, Public Defender, and criminal defense attorney – to reduce timelines for all cases, aiming to expedite both felony and misdemeanor proceedings and reduce the time people spend in HCCC pretrial.
- C. Population Analysis.** To safely divert people and support successful transitions post-incarceration, it is essential to understand individual needs. The Commission asks the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to consider a population analysis with the following information in a confidential, non-identifying manner: *demographic data, mental health and substance use data, key health indicators, housing data, employment, and income status*. This information will be used to determine what services and support are needed, what is currently provided and available within the community, and where the gaps are. There is a strong community network, including providers, throughout Hawaii Island, but more data is needed to link people to services and support these efforts effectively.

4) Enhance Programming Opportunities and Reduce Idle Time

In addition to facility overcrowding, people in custody have too much idle time and limited access to programming. The Commission witnessed this idle time and recommended the following:

- A. Re-establish and Expand Programming Opportunities.** Re-establish programming opportunities at pre-COVID levels and then expand opportunities. Bring more programs back into the facility from community service providers. Community partnerships and programs are essential to enhance the facility's ability to manage operational issues.
- B. Increase VolinCore Training Opportunities.** Offer regularly scheduled continuous VolinCore training opportunities for community service and program providers.

The Commission urges DCR to consider and adopt the following new recommendations based on observations that were made on April 10, 2025.

1) Ensure Access to Grievances

The Commission noted the significant lack of access to the grievance process for individuals housed at Hale Nani and for those housed in Wainuenue. Staff should be retrained on proper grievance procedures, along with the implementation of ongoing monitoring to ensure consistent and equitable access to the grievance system.

2) Reevaluate and Monitor Staff Posts

People in Punahale reported being on 23-hour lockdown and are not given the opportunity to go outside for recreation. Additionally, staff reported that accommodating outdoor recreation in Komohana more than once a week is challenging with short staff. The Commission has observed on more than one visit what appears to be an excess number of staff posted at the temporary gate. At times, the Commission has observed four to five staff at the gate. The Commission strongly recommends that HCCC reevaluates how staff are posted and utilized throughout the facility to ensure that recreational time can be accommodated as frequently as possible.

Past Meetings

On May 8, 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 – May

Item	Cost	Qty	Total	Description
Operating Expenses			\$885.00	
General Office Supplies				
Telephone				
Other Current Expenditures	\$885.00	1	\$885.00	autopsy reports
Inter-Island Travel			\$564.02	
Airfare				
Car Rental				
Per Diem	\$20.00	17	\$340.00	multiple travel dates
Lodging				
Transportation - Uber	\$28.02	1	\$28.02	5/8-GC
Airport Parking	\$25.00	5	\$125.00	multiple travel dates
Airport Parking	\$24.00	2	\$48.00	2/13, 3/13-RI
Airport Parking	\$23.00	1	\$23.00	5/8-GC
Baggage Fee				
Miscellaneous				
Mainland Travel			\$0.00	
Airfare				
Car Rental				
Per Diem				
Lodging				
Transportation				
Airport Parking				
Baggage Fee				
Toll Fee				
Miscellaneous				
Conferences			\$3,420.76	
Airfare	\$942.00	1	\$942.00	11/12-11/16/2024-CMJ
Car Rental	\$674.00	1	\$674.00	11/12-11/16/2024-CMJ
Per Diem	\$1,543.15	1	\$1,543.15	11/12-11/16/2024-CMJ
Lodging				
Transportation - Uber	\$21.55	1	\$21.55	11/12-11/16/2024-CMJ
Airport Parking	\$155.00	1	\$155.00	11/12-11/16/2024-CMJ
Baggage Fee	\$70.00	1	\$70.00	11/12-11/16/2024-CMJ
Toll Fee	\$15.06	1	\$15.06	11/12-11/16/2024-CMJ
Miscellaneous				
TOTAL			\$4,869.78	

** 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 held on June 12, 2025. The next monthly meeting is scheduled to occur on July 10, 2025, at the Leiopapa A. Kamehameha Building, 235 S Beretania St., Room 204, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813 and online via Microsoft Teams. More information can be found on the Commission's webpage here: <https://hcsoc.hawaii.gov/information>.



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Kauai Community Correctional Center (KCCC)
May 2025 Site Tour Observations
Date of Report: June 12, 2025

On Thursday, May 8, 2025, the Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission (the Commission, HCSOC) toured the Kauai Community Correctional Center (KCCC) collectively as a group. The tour included four of the five Commissioners – Mark Patterson (Chair), Martha Torney, Mark Browning, Ron Ibarra in addition to the Oversight Coordinator and staff. This report encompasses notes from the Commissioners and will be discussed at the monthly public meeting held on June 12, 2025.

General Observations

The rated capacity of KCCC is 128, and during the tour, the headcount of the facility was 84 individuals (67 males, and 17 females) with a 65% occupancy. The Commission is happy to report that the population has lowered by approximately 26% since the Commission last visited in 2024, when the headcount was 117 individuals (96 males, and 21 females) with a 91% occupancy. The pretrial population makes up 52.3% of the KCCC jail population.

KCCC staff provided access to the Commission without any hesitation or issues. Commissioners were able to speak to individuals in custody throughout the facility. The Commission is pleased to report that people in custody are no longer being housed in shipping containers or dayroom spaces at KCCC. This is much needed change and the Commission appreciated the KCCC team and all of their efforts to ensure people are housed appropriately.

Ongoing Construction Projects

There were two critical construction projects underway during the Commission's previous visit in 2024. The first being the sewer main in front of the facility had burst, preventing the utilization of three holding cells adjacent to the administration area, and the second being the water main by the highway being serviced. The Commission was informed that the water main construction has resulted in the delay of much needed remodel of the kitchen.

The construction on the sewer main and water main is complete, no longer preventing the kitchen from being repaired or replaced, or the use of the holding units.

Shipping Container Housing

The shipping containers in front of the administration area were originally used for new intakes and active COVID-19 cases. When the Commission visited in 2024, they were being used as a secure housing unit for women. The Commission is pleased to report that the shipping containers

are no longer being used for housing. This is an important development as staff have reported when utilizing the shipping containers, there were not enough staff to post at the unit, leaving people in custody with no supervision.

Module A

Module A is the oldest part of the facility, opened in 1977, and is made up of four, three-cell units. Each three-cell unit has a very small dayroom that opens into a larger central dayroom. During the Commission's last visit, the new shower area in Module A had water pooling in the center of the room. The Commission did not observe any water pooling during this visit.

Despite some overcrowding in single-cells, Module A's population has generally improved since the Commission's prior visit. Another notable improvement in Module A is that the dayrooms are no longer being used for sleeping quarters but are serving their intended purpose.

Some people in Module A reported spending 22 hours per day in their cell due to short staffing. The Commission finds this unacceptable as research clearly indicates that more time locked in cells creates more mental health issues and suicide risks, greater tension between people in custody, less safe conditions for staff, and less rehabilitative programming for those in custody.

The law library is located in Module A, a male-only unit, potentially causing access restrictions for females. The Commission observed what appeared to be sign-up sheets for people in custody to make appointments to use the library. The Commission observed that the sign-up sheet had no entries. However, access to the law library is not a complaint the Commission has received from people in custody at KCCC.

Holding Cells

Three holding cells are located within the Administration area of Module A, with observation windows along the hallway. These are multipurpose cells for administrative segregation and suicide watch. During the Commission's visit in 2024, the holding cells were not in use due to sewage repairs that were being made.

The Commission observed a woman in a holding cell whom staff reported had serious mental health needs. The Commission is concerned that if the woman in custody is exhibiting mental health conditions, the conditions of the holding unit could potentially deteriorate her mental health condition further. Housing women in a men's facility severely limits the facility's ability to ensure women are in an environment that is more conducive to their rehabilitation. The Commission is also concerned that this particular woman is not getting the out of cell time she needs, as people with mental health conditions often require more supervision than those who do not have mental health conditions. The Commission is concerned that extended periods of confinement in holding cells could be detrimental to anyone's reported mental health condition.

Module B

Module B was added in 1986 and is a unique space with six large cells, allowing a rated capacity of four people in custody assigned to each cell. During the Commission's previous visit in 2024, three double bunks (beds for six individuals) were found in the cell that the Commissioners had visited. The individuals assigned to that cell were deeply concerned with the time spent in their

cells. They claimed they were confined to the cell for 22 hours per day. The population in that cell has improved since the prior visit, now housing 2 individuals, however, it is clear that the amount of time they get out of cell has not changed.

The dayroom is quite large, but all individuals were locked in their cells during the Commission's visit. Staff reported they receive two hours per day of out-of-cell time (22 hours locked down), but sometimes they may receive an additional hour out (21 hours locked down). Additionally, the facility placed steel shutters over the cell door windows, limiting any sight outside of the cell. During the Commission's prior visit in 2024, staff claimed this was for security reasons. Again, the Commission finds this level of in-cell time and isolation unacceptable.

Module C

Module C, opened in 1997, is an L-shaped building with two large dormitories joined by a multipurpose room in the center and a bathroom for each wing. Each dorm is divided into cubicles with half-walls. The building was under renovation during the Commission's March 2023 visit, and renovations were completed when the Commission visited again in 2024. During the 2024 visit, it was evident that all windows were replaced, and the bathrooms were renovated. The unit was clean, and individuals had considerable freedom of movement within the unit.

On May 8, 2025, Module C was closed due to staffing shortages and a low count of individuals who can be housed in a dorm setting. Exposure to natural light in Module C is significantly less limited than the exposure to natural light in Module A and B cells. With more staffing, Module C could be opened, potentially addressing some of the overcrowding in Module A, and providing a more rehabilitative environment for a larger number of the facility's population.

Cabins A-C

Cabins A, B and C were originally built as temporary housing for Kauai residents after Hurricane Iniki. The cabins were moved to the facility between 1993 and 1995 as temporary housing but continue to be used today. These units were not included in the 2001 capacity report as they do not meet fire code—no fire suppression system and no second exit. Although the cabins feel tight and overcrowded, there were no complaints from the male or female occupants.

Kitchen

The facility-wide kitchen and mess hall for Module C and the cabins are in a separate building that is in dire need of replacement. The floors in the kitchen and mess hall were worn through to bare wood in some areas and completely gone in other areas. Plywood had been temporarily laid down to cover missing floorboards, but they were flimsy and extremely dangerous to walk on. The dangerous condition of the floor in the kitchen and mess hall could easily result in serious injury to staff and people in custody. A new floor must be laid as soon as possible.

It is important to note that during the March 2023 tour, the Commissioners noted the same issues and concerns but were told that the kitchen was soon scheduled to be replaced. During the 2024 visit, Commissioners were told work cannot start until the water main was repaired, a project that is now complete. In 2024, Commissioners were also informed that a module system is to be installed behind the existing kitchen which will then be removed, and a kitchen and chow hall will

be built. The conditions have only worsened since the Commission's 2023 and 2024 tours, and it is obvious that nothing has been done to remedy the situation.

The condition of the structure has degraded so significantly that the ability of staff to manage and provide quality meals is in question. One Commissioner noted that the kitchen is in such despair that it should be closed entirely and alternative means of providing meals be considered.

As of May 8, 2025, Commissioners are still being informed that a module system has been ordered but has missed its shipping date several times at a port in California. Once the module is shipped, there are concerns that shipping logistics could cause further delivery delays. Once shipped to Honolulu, the module will most likely have to change barges at Sand Island before being shipped to Nawiliwili Harbor on Kauai. The most direct route from Nawiliwili Harbor to KCCC is approximately 6 miles (13 minutes). Commissioners are concerned that the module could be too heavy for any cargo trucks on the island, and the width of the module may be greater than the width of the road, which would require closing the road when transporting the unit.

As various factors make the exact installation date of the modular kitchen unknown, the Commission does not view the promise of the modular kitchen as a solution to the immediate dangers of the current kitchen. Staff reported that they have estimated the cost of ordering meals from outside sources pending the arrival of the modular kitchen. This may be a solution that is less costly to the State than the lawsuits that could arise from keeping the current kitchen open. Pending the installation of the modular kitchen, the Commission urges DCR to close the current kitchen and immediately implement a temporary food service solution. The Commission has been reporting on this issue since 2023 with no changes made or action taken by administration.

Staffing Shortages

Staff burnout was extremely evident during the tour in 2024 and continues to concern the Commission. This appears to be due to severe staffing shortages, consistently long work hours (consistent 16- and 24-hour shifts), and being tasked with multiple posts and multiple roles. For example, the gate post is expected to manage the shipping containers and the furlough population. In reality, those should be three separate posts for three separate officers, however, one officer is expected to run all posts without mistakes. Pure exhaustion has been more evident in KCCC than in any other facility. The Commission believes that KCCC staff are doing the best they can, but they have been forced to work in these same conditions for far too long, and relief is needed as soon as possible.

Staff reported that they may need to return to 24-hour shifts due to staffing shortages being compounded by staff taking leave.

Restraint Chair and WRAP Chair

In 2024, the Commission was quite taken aback to discover both a Restraint Chair and a WRAP chair (which uses straps to fully immobilize the body) in the security office of the facility. These restrictive restraints are at the highest level on the use of force continuum. Restraint and WRAP Chairs have caused serious harm to people in custody, resulted in death, and have been subjected to lawsuits in many states. It is an area ripe for misuse and litigation.

The Commission is happy to report that there is no longer a Restraint Chair at KCCC. However, a WRAP chair is still being stored in the security office. Staff in the facility were not aware of any policy governing the use of the chairs but claimed that staff were trained in how to use the WRAP chair. The Commission ensured the Warden has access to confidential policies in his office, and that staff can reference them as needed.

The Commission did not see a log that is maintained while an individual is restrained in the WRAP chair. The Commission was informed that the chair is mostly utilized when an individual is kicking or banging the cell door to protect the individual from injury and the cell from destruction.

Previous Recommendations to be considered by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation:

- 1) Immediately prioritize the construction and replacement of the KCCC kitchen as it poses a dangerous threat to individuals or staff being hurt due to its desperate condition. In the interim, must repair and maintain current flooring.**

The floors in the kitchen and mess hall were worn through to bare wood in some areas and completely gone in other areas. Plywood had been temporarily laid down to cover missing floorboards, but they were flimsy and extremely dangerous to walk on. The dangerous condition of the floor in the kitchen and mess hall could easily result in serious injury to staff and people in custody. A new floor must be laid as soon as possible.

Pending the installation of the modular kitchen, the Commission urges DCR to repair and maintain the floor. The Commission has received complaints from people in custody and staff, and the safety of staff and people in custody is one of the highest responsibilities of the department.

- 2) Ensure individuals in the facility are receiving the most out-of-cell time possible in alignment with a rehabilitative and therapeutic environment.**

In 2024, individuals in Module B claimed to be locked in their cells for 22 hours per day. On May 8, 2025, individuals in Module A and B made the same claim. This, by definition, is considered restrictive housing, also sometimes referred to as solitary confinement.

The Commission understands there are staffing issues that contribute to this issue, and applauds the Department's efforts to fill vacancies. However, if the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation is serious about the transition to a therapeutic and rehabilitative system, it is imperative to ensure individuals are not locked down within their cells for such extended periods of time.

Therefore, daily schedules should be posted in all housing units for transparency and accountability regarding programming and out of cell time. This allows individuals in custody to anticipate what is to come, and to hold the staff accountable and ensure programming and out of cell time is completed in a consistent manner.

Additional recommendations to be considered by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation:

1) Implement 12-Hour Shifts

The Commission highly recommends implementing 12-hour shifts. This has been requested by the facility after surveying staff and measuring interest. This was also highlighted as an evident solution for KCCC in the [Correctional Staff Survey, Findings, and Recommendations Report](#). In order to eliminate the need for exhausting 24-hour shifts that cause burnout and an increase in leave requests, the Department must try something different than what it is doing now. Having additional staff at the facility can ensure that posts are not understaffed and increase out-of-cell time and safety for people in custody.

2) Enable all Facilities to Initiate and Process Emergency Hires On-Site

The Commission highly recommends that DCR allow correctional facilities to conduct on-site emergency hiring to expedite filling vacancies and increase staffing levels that are desperately needed to:

- Monitor the mental health population and ensure the mental health population are housed in the best possible setting for their condition;
- Ensure people in custody have access to out-of-cell time;
- Provide much needed and urgent relief to burnt-out staff; and
- Improve staff morale and retention.

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