

# STATE OF COLORADO

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April 14, 2015

Senator Lucia Guzman, Chair  
Legislative Audit Committee  
State Services Building  
1525 Sherman Street, 7th Floor  
Denver, CO 80203-1700

Dear Senator Guzman,

The Joint Budget Committee (JBC) requests a performance and financial audit of several Department of Corrections (DOC) programs. We request this audit out of concern that these programs have serious deficiencies that render them much less effective and efficient than they should be. During recent months a number of current and former Department of Corrections staff members have communicated with members of the JBC and have described various problems with DOC programs. The JBC considers many of these allegations credible and believes that in depth investigation by the State Auditor is warranted.

The JBC's first area of concern is the Department of Correction's mental health programs. The JBC requests that the State Auditor evaluate:

- Whether the mental health care provided to inmates is adequate and accords with contemporary standards of care;
- Whether pre-release programs for offenders with mental health problems are appropriate and effective;
- Whether mental health programs are appropriately staffed, including an examination of whether staff are properly distributed among the relevant mental health specialties and whether staff are efficiently distributed among facilities;
- Whether compensations policies for mental health staff are consistent with recruitment and retention of qualified personnel;
- Whether mental health records are accurate, reliable, timely, and complete, and whether the information systems that maintains these records are well suited to the task they must perform.
- Whether offender suicides, fights, assaults, and the other incidents that occur in DOC's mental health programs can be reduced; and

- Whether the Department's quality management program is effective. This is a matter of particular concern because the JBC requested that the Department provide the Committee with a copy of a recent quality management report that is said to be highly critical of clinical programs. The Department declined to provide the report, citing its own quality management regulations.

The JBC's second area of concern is the DOC's sex offender treatment and monitoring program. Several years ago, the JBC provided funding for an outside evaluation of this program. The evaluators focused on the program's efficacy and cost-effectiveness and offered numerous recommendations for improvement. Beginning in FY 2013-14, the DOC received funding to implement these recommendations. Approximately 1600 offenders have now been screened and are ready for Phase I of the new treatment program, but the DOC has made little progress in working through this backlog. The DOC estimates that it will take five years to eliminate its backlog, but independent calculations suggest that the backlog is more likely to grow than shrink. The JBC requests that the State Auditor evaluate the Department's implementation of the outside evaluator's recommendations and determine what is wrong.

Finally, the JBC requests that the State Auditor examine inmate banking and inmate canteen accounts. Communications received by the JBC indicate that these programs are not properly operated and managed.

We greatly appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Senator Kent Lambert, Chair  
Joint Budget Committee