



PRESS RELEASE

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Commissioner Johnson Adopts HIV/AIDS Task Force Recommendations

Jackson—Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) Commissioner Robert Johnson has sent letters to each member of the HIV/AIDS Task Force informing them that he has accepted their recommendations that increases HIV-positive inmates access to educational, treatment, and job skills programs. The task force report, submitted to Commissioner Johnson on March 30, contains eleven specific recommendations, including:

- Completion of a Hazard Analysis Review of each vocational program at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility (CMCF) and Mississippi State Penitentiary (MSP) by University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) staff;
- Appointment of an HIV Training Advisory Committee to oversee and review increased HIV training of staff and inmates;
- Work with the Mississippi State Department of Health and UMMC to obtain funds to hire an additional Social Worker and Discharge Planner;
- Assignment of three additional security officers for programs at MSP;
- Train selected inmates to be peer educators to be used in all MDOC units;
- Begin a gradual integration of HIV-positive inmates into programs beginning with Adult Basic Education, GED and Pre-Release and then into vocational programs; and
- Adoption of a policy that does not deny HIV-positive inmates, or any other disability status, A custody status if qualified in the initial classification process.

(more)

In his letter, Commissioner Johnson stated, “The report does point to some shortcomings in the current programming opportunities afforded to this inmate population. I will initiate MDOC’s adoption of these recommendations by asking the University of Mississippi Medical Center to complete a review of the vocational programs at CMCF and MSP. Once this report is completed and reviewed by MDOC, I will provide a more detailed timeline for the implementation of the remaining recommendations.”

The 15 members of the HIV/AIDS Task Force, created November 2000 by Commissioner Johnson, was composed of individuals representing health organizations, inmate advocacy organizations, and MDOC employees.

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