

## **Allegheny County Jail Unannounced Inspection Report**

**Date of Inspection: January 8, 2025**

**Inspectors: Bethany Hallam, MAN-E**

**Time of Arrival: 10:10 AM**

**Time of Departure: 12:15 PM**

### **Overview**

On January 8, 2025, we conducted an unannounced inspection of the Allegheny County Jail (ACJ). Upon arrival, we were greeted by Major Batykefer, who emphasized the importance of direct communication for addressing concerns. Sergeant Brown escorted us throughout the facility. The purpose of this inspection was to address specific concerns raised by incarcerated individuals and their families and observe general conditions within the jail.

### **Observations and Findings**

In the **4D** pod, individuals reported that the water was cold, and this was confirmed upon inspection. A few individuals discussed changes they wished to make with how they use the Pluto app, as well as the discontinuation of iHeartRadio, which had previously been free. They also noted that the last Oversight Board meeting minutes available on their tablets were from September 2024. Questions were raised about the classification process, and pod workers expressed concerns about their inability to receive contact visits, a benefit granted to other incarcerated workers. Additionally, we received questions about the appeals process for misconduct allegations at Renewal that resulted in incarceration.

In the **4C** pod, individuals also reported cold water in their showers, which we confirmed upon arrival. Frequent lockdowns were mentioned, with some noting a temporary decrease for a while before the lockdowns increased again two months ago.

In the **7E** pod, which houses incarcerated children, we observed the dedication and care of the teachers and Pittsburgh Mount Oliver Intermediate Unit principal. Plans were made for us to return during class hours to observe the educational environment. Some of the incarcerated children asked about a rumor about the ending of the monthly \$125. Multiple people also gave positive feedback regarding Captain Terry and his team.

On the **2C** pod, we talked to two individuals whose families contacted us because they were concerned about them. One individual reported medical issues and the need for surgery.

### **Themes Identified**

Water temperature issues were a recurring problem across multiple pods, with individuals consistently reporting cold water in the showers. Tablet access was another concern, as

individuals were dissatisfied with various apps and the limited availability of recent Oversight Board meeting minutes. Lockdowns were reported as a significant issue, particularly in the 4C pod. There was frustration about the inequity in contact visit policies for incarcerated pod workers. Health and medical needs were a recurring theme, with individuals highlighting difficulties accessing necessary medical care. The monthly \$125 was discussed at length as word spread about the potential of its ending, with many incarcerated individuals expressing concern and confusion about that possibility.

## **Conclusion**

The inspection revealed several ongoing issues that require immediate and long-term attention, including water temperature problems, access to educational and recreational resources via tablets, and disparities in contact visit policies. Additionally, reports of lockdowns and inadequate medical care highlight systemic concerns that impact the well-being of incarcerated individuals.

We are optimistic that Warden Wingard's administration will change many of these areas. We will continue our oversight and hopefully communicate with him to see what we can do to help improve the conditions we have seen month after month, year after year.