



U.S. Department of Justice  
Civil Rights Division

JMS:CEL:ANG:JV:pjc  
DJ: 168-36-43

*Special Litigation Section - PHB  
950 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington DC 20530*

December 11, 2012

The Honorable Deval Patrick  
Massachusetts State House  
Office of the Governor  
Room 360  
Boston, MA 02133

Re: Investigation of the Worcester County Jail and House of Correction, West  
Boylston, Massachusetts

Dear Governor Patrick:

On November 17, 2006, the Civil Rights Division initiated an investigation of conditions at the Worcester County Jail and House of Correction (the "Jail"), pursuant to the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act ("CRIPA"), 42 U.S.C. § 1997. We initiated the investigation after receiving reports concerning protection from harm, including inadequate suicide prevention and high levels of inmate-on-inmate violence.

In accordance with statutory requirements, after completing our investigation, we issued a letter detailing our findings in April 2008. Our investigation concluded that the Jail substantially departed from generally accepted professional care in its failure to: protect inmates from harm, protect inmates from exposure to unsanitary and unsafe environmental conditions, and provide inmates with adequate mental health care to address their serious mental health needs. Our findings were serious and indicated that the Jail substantially departed from generally accepted professional standards of care. Notably, the letter included specific findings of deficiencies in the areas of security and mental health staffing; classification; investigations; the grievance process; use of restraints; sanitation; suicide prevention; chronic and acute care for inmates with serious mental illness; discharge planning; and quality improvement systems.

Since we issued our findings, we have become aware of changes in leadership within the Worcester County Sheriff's Office, as well as changes to the Jail's medical provider. We are also aware of ongoing litigation to remedy some of the problems we found during our investigation. At this time, we do not have confirmation that the pattern or practice of constitutional violations we found continues today. Accordingly, we are closing our investigation at this time.

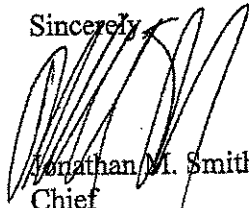
Even though we are closing our investigation, we will continue to receive and review any complaints regarding conditions at the Jail, and we will closely scrutinize allegations related to the issues of protection from harm, environmental dangers, and mental health care. Please be

advised that if we have reasonable cause to believe that the Jail engages in a pattern or practice of unconstitutional violations in the future, we have the authority to open another investigation under CRIPA.

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If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 514-6258. You may also contact the attorneys handling this matter – Anika Gzifa at (202) 305-3216 or Jude Volek at (202) 353-1077.

Sincerely,



Jonathan M. Smith  
Chief  
Special Litigation Section

cc: The Honorable Martha Coakley  
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