



Committee for Public Counsel Services  
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CHIEF COUNSEL

September 24, 2021

Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins, M.P.A.  
Suffolk County Sheriff's Department  
20 Bradston Street  
Boston, MA 02118

Dear Sheriff Tompkins,

I write today from a place of concern. During the past three months we have heard about four prisoners who have died while in the custody of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department. This news has hit our staff hard, and the shock has reverberated among our clients - many of whom have been or will be in your custody. There are feelings of fear, anger and confusion as we wait to hear what happened, why, and what is being done to ensure tragedies like this do not happen in the future.

As you know, we are living through scary, unpredictable times. The pandemic is still raging, the courts are effectively open, and arrests are increasing to pre-pandemic levels. The brief respite from over incarceration is over, and we are worried that our clients are being sent to facilities where their health and well-being is not guaranteed.

We at CPCS ask that you share whatever information you are legally able to share with us about these tragic deaths. We would like any information about what led to these deaths and to hear what steps, if any, will be implemented at your facility to prevent more tragedies like these. We stand ready to assist in any way we can, but in order to do so, we need as much information as you are able to provide.

I am sure these tragedies have had a negative effect on you and your staff, and I empathize with you. I know you take the safety of your prisoners seriously, and to lose those under your watch takes a toll. We are also feeling profound sadness. These people are our clients. We learn their stories, and we stand shoulder-to-shoulder with them as they face life-changing moments. We want to know that our clients are safe, and I ask that you do what you can to tell us how and why we ended up in this dark moment.

I look forward to hearing from you, and I wish you and your staff good health as we all move forward through these uncertain times.

Respectfully,

Anthony Benedetti  
Chief Counsel