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August 3, 2018

Via First-Class Mail

Nicholas Gale
Environmental Health Inspector, CSP, BEH
Department of Public Health
180 Beaman Street
West Boylston, MA 01583

RE: Facility Inspection – MCI Cedar Junction, Walpole

Dear Mr. Gale,

I write in response to your letter dated July 23, 2018 regarding complaints of excessive heat and poor ventilation at MCI-Cedar Junction. The Department of Correction (“DOC”) takes heat and ventilation complaints very seriously. The health, safety and wellbeing of staff and inmates are of paramount concern. As the Department of Public Health (“DPH”) noted during its visit on July 5, 2018, MCI-Cedar Junction was already providing inmates with the following:

- Ice water is provided for inmates in the afternoons to each block;
- Ceiling fans are operated in an attempt to draw out the warm air through ventilation in the roof;
- Inmates in a second or third level tier have the freedom to go down to the common area within the block;
- Inmates may leave their blocks each day for programs, HSU, yard, meals, etc.;
- Inmates are provided with optional 1 or 2 hour yard times.

In addition, DPH noted that the facility was also ensuring the following:

- Exhaust ventilation systems are turned on for short periods of time, once per day during count to move warm air out of the units. The systems are operated during count periods, when inmates are locked in their cells, as the loud noise creates a security issue;
- Ice water is provided in Cambros to each housing unit once per day from the Kitchen;
- Inmates are allowed access to the outside recreational area once per day in either the morning or afternoon;
- Within all housing units, inmates on the 2nd and 3rd tiers are permitted to come down to the 1st tier common area;
- Inmates have access to potable water within their cells;
- Block 9 and 10 have windows in the main hallways which are opened to circulate air and bring cooler air inside.

Thank you for recognizing the many actions taken by DOC to address heat issues.

DPH's inspection also found two health and safety violations concerning the ventilation in A2 Block and 4 Block at MCI-Cedar Junction. Pursuant to 105 CMR 451.140, "[e]ach inmate shall have adequate ventilation at all times. Each facility shall have ventilation of each cell and each habitable or occupiable space, bathroom, and toilet compartment in compliance with 780 CMR, State Building Code. Natural ventilation through a window in each cell is recommended." 105 CMR 451.140. I was informed by staff that these violations were noted by measuring the airflow by placement of a hand over the vent.

Please be assured that MCI-Cedar Junction has a number of scientific instruments that are able to precisely measure airflow. This is because the American Correctional Association ("ACA") requires that accredited prisons such as MCI-Cedar Junction maintain airflow of 15 cubic feet per minute ("CFM"). The last time the ventilation at MCI-Cedar Junction was comprehensively audited by the ACA, it far exceeded this 15 CFM requirement.

Following your letter, I instructed staff to go to several blocks to measure the airflow using an anemometer. In all cases, the airflow far exceeded 15 CFM. I invite DPH to return to MCI-Cedar Junction at its convenience so that we can demonstrate that the ventilation measurement with this equipment is in full compliance with the DPH ventilation regulation cited above.

I also wish to inform you of the following steps that we have recently taken to make the prison environment more habitable for staff and inmates:

- Ice Water - With respect to your recommendation that MCI-Cedar Junction "[p]rovide additional ice water to inmates," please be advised that ice water is provided for inmates on each general population block on both the 7 A.M. to 3 P.M. and 3 P.M. to 11 P.M. shifts. It is not necessary that ice water be provided on the 11 P.M. to 7 A.M. shift because the inmates are locked inside their cells during the night hours and have access to water within their cells.
- Exhaust Ventilation – With respect to your recommendation that MCI-Cedar Junction "[r]un the exhaust ventilation systems in each unit more than once per

day,” please be advised that on July 26, 2018, the MCI-Cedar Junction Deputy Superintendent of Operations instituted changes to the smoke ejector schedule. Effective immediately, during the summer months, the smoke ejectors will be utilized for 15 minute intervals 3 times during the 7 A.M. to 3 P.M. shift, 3 times during the 3 P.M. to 11 P.M. shift, and 2 times during the 11 P.M. to 7 A.M. shift. This means that the smoke ejectors will be utilized 8 times per day instead of the previous 4 per day.

- Wall Fans – With respect to your recommendation that MCI-Cedar Junction “[i]ninstall additional wall fans,” please be advised that the Department has already purchased 24 new large fans for MCI-Cedar Junction, 13 of which were delivered on July 25, 2018, at a cost of \$13,361.04. Each block will receive 3 large fans that will be mounted to the wall opposite the cells, and they are being installed in the hotter blocks first. These fans are already installed and operational in Block 4 and Block 8, which were thought to have been the warmest blocks. The Department plans to install the additional fans as time permits. As these fans must be hardwired by electricians, all inmates must vacate the block to be housed elsewhere and their property must be relocated in order for the fans to be installed. In many cases, the Department must incur significant overtime expenses to install these fans.
- Training and Monitoring of Heat-Related Illness – With respect to the recommendation that staff be trained and monitor heat-related illness, please be advised medical staff are on site 24 hours per day to assist in the event that someone experiences a heat-related issue.

I trust that the above actions demonstrate that MCI-Cedar Junction is in compliance with DPH ventilation requirements and, in any event, that these additional steps eliminate any remaining concerns that DPH may have regarding the indoor air temperature or quality at MCI-Cedar Junction. I appreciate DPH’s valuable input and look forward to working with you in the future. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Very truly yours,



Douglas DeMoura
Superintendent, MCI-Cedar Junction

cc: Jana Ferguson, Director, BEH
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