



# Ombudsman Update

## Announcements and Updates from the Office

### INSIDE

#### FROM THE OMBUDSMAN

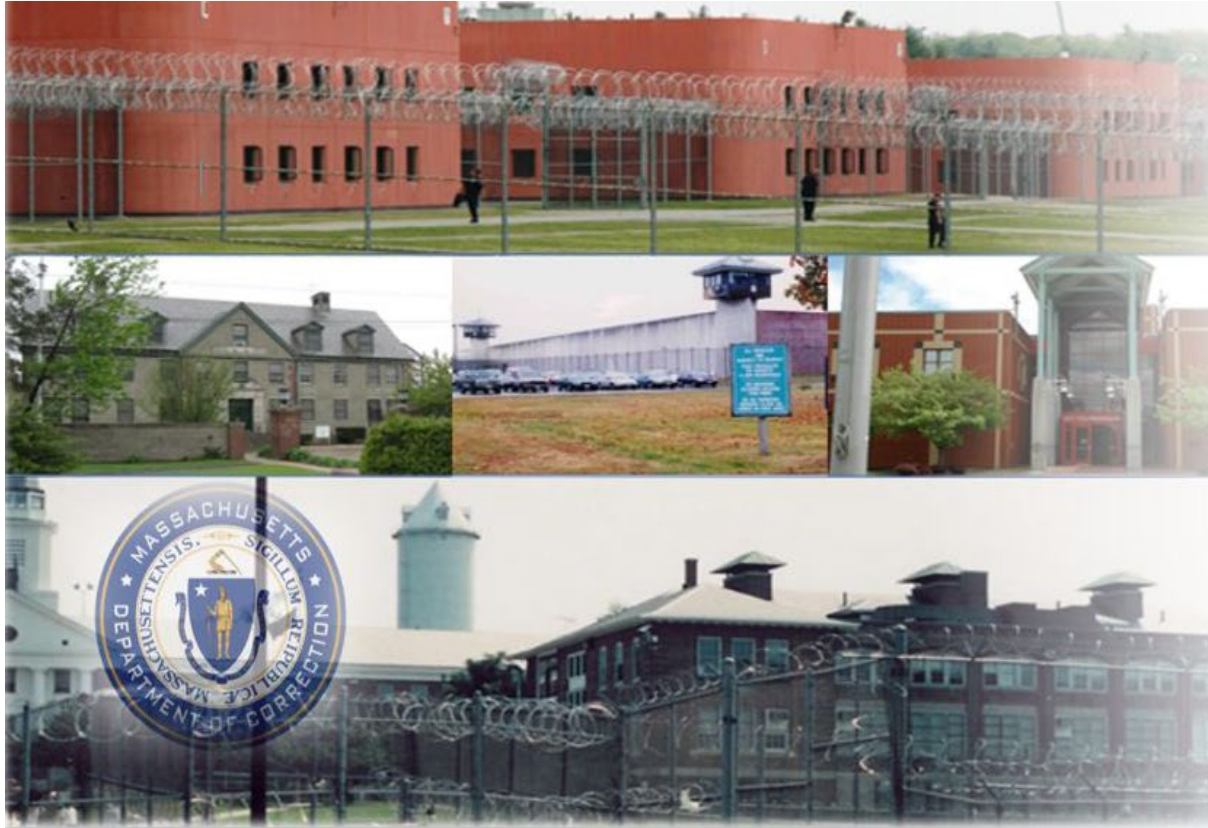
Summer message from Lauren “Laurie” Andersen, the Executive Director/ Ombudsman

#### UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Important updates and announcements concerning health and wellness initiatives

#### ABOUT US / GET IN TOUCH

Learn about the Office and ways to connect



## FROM THE OMBUDSMAN

*By Lauren “Laurie” Andersen, MM, RN, CEN, CCRN*

Summer 2024 has been marked by intense heat and humidity, with sunshine dominating the season. At the Office of the Ombudsman (Office), we want to extend our heartfelt thanks to all of you for your hard work, consistency, and dedication in these challenging conditions. While public and media discussions often focus on the heat’s impact on those in custody, we want to acknowledge the invaluable efforts of the DOC staff, who are rarely mentioned in those conversations. Your work is essential in keeping DOC facilities safe and operational, even in the hottest conditions. Thank you for all that you do — your efforts matter, and we appreciate you!

MCI-Concord concluded its long and storied history as a prison at the end of June. DOC staff stationed there during the facility’s waning days navigated the challenging process of reducing the incarcerated population and closing the facility with remarkable care and professionalism. We deeply respect and appreciate the compassion shown by everyone involved. Superintendent Gray, along with all the staff at MCI-Concord, handled this complex and emotional transition with grace and dignity. The celebration and commemorative t-shirts were small tokens of our deep respect for the men and women of the DOC who dedicated themselves to MCI-Concord. For those who have moved on in their careers, we hope your new roles provide you with a warm welcome and a seamless transition.



Certainly, we hope you've each had a chance to take some well-deserved vacation time this summer, enjoying moments with friends and family. The summer season is a perfect opportunity to explore new activities outside of work, fostering a better work-life balance. Fresh air and friends and family can make all the difference!

To all DOC staff, thank you for your hard work—we care about you, and you should too.

### **Struggle Well**

Remember, seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness. If you're facing challenges, finding support is an important first step.

We encourage all DOC staff to attend the *Struggle Well* training if you haven't already. This program is designed for you, focusing on your well-being, not just work. *Struggle Well* returns this fall with Monday training sessions featuring an enhanced curriculum and new resources to help you continue growing both personally and professionally. The Office will continue to sponsor lunches and support *Struggle Well* in its mission. The Office is also sponsoring workbooks for the fall classes.

Thank you for the work you do every day to keep the people of Massachusetts safe and for creating a positive environment for those in DOC facilities.

### **Focus on Wellness**

The DOC's centralized Wellness Committee remains dedicated to supporting DOC staff by fostering teamwork and camaraderie among staff. Exciting DOC-wide events are on the horizon, including a basketball tournament and back-to-school fundraisers to provide school supplies for underprivileged children in Massachusetts. We encourage everyone to participate and make a positive impact both within our community and beyond.

The best way to create positive change is by getting involved! DOC staff are leaders in each DOC facility, and your support for wellness initiatives can make a significant impact. The Office is fully committed to the centralized Wellness Committee, each facility Wellness Committee, and the combined efforts of all involved. Recently, we sponsored gift cards for each Wellness Committee to engage staff at their facilities, offering prizes like Dunkin' Donuts or Starbucks coffee gift cards.

#### **YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT IS ESSENTIAL**

Be sure to support these Initiatives at your facilities:

- ✓ Participate;
- ✓ Join the Conversation; and
- ✓ Make Suggestions.

**Gym Updates:** The gym at MCI-Shirley Training Center/Minimum has been beautifully updated, and we've distributed flyers to encourage more staff to use this great space—check it out! Meanwhile, the gym space at Old Colony Correctional Center is still under renovation but is making significant progress toward becoming a modern facility for all at the Bridgewater facility.

**Correction Day Education:** Mark your calendars! The Office is developing an exciting curriculum focused on overall wellness, both mind and body. We will be hosting the first-ever *Correction Staff Day* on October 9, 2024. Keep an eye out for flyers and be sure to sign up—it's going to be a fun and informative day!

#### **Wellness Quote of the Season**

**"You are never too old to set another goal  
or to dream a new dream."**

C.S. Lewis



### Interact with the Office

The Office has updated our website and introduced a new logo that reflects our expanded role as the independent health and wellness advisor to the DOC.

The lighthouse logo symbolizes a beacon of light guiding the DOC toward improved health and wellness for all.

We invite you to visit our website at [www.ombudsman-madoc.org](http://www.ombudsman-madoc.org) to explore the resources we have to offer. As always, I encourage you to connect with us and share your thoughts, questions, concerns, or ideas related to health and wellness. You can reach out through our web-based inquiry form at [www.ombudsman-madoc.org/submit-inquiry/](http://www.ombudsman-madoc.org/submit-inquiry/) or by calling us toll-free at 833-662-8410.

Additionally, I welcome you to speak with me or any member of our staff when we visit your facilities. You are the experts, and we are here to support you in any way we can.

We care deeply about each of you and are committed to supporting you in the important and challenging work you do.

Thank you for all that you do—You Matter!

Sincerely,

*Laurie Andersen*

### Our New Website URL

[www.ombudsman-madoc.org](http://www.ombudsman-madoc.org)

## ABOUT THE OFFICE



Office of the Ombudsman  
Independent Health & Wellness  
Advisor to Corrections

The mission of the Office is to promote a healthy environment for everyone living or working in DOC facilities. Initially responsible for monitoring and reporting on the DOC's COVID-19 mitigation efforts, the role of the Office has since expanded. Post-pandemic, the Office advises the DOC on infection control and wellness initiatives by developing comprehensive health and wellness programs, along with training and education initiatives. In collaboration with the DOC, we implement these programs to positively influence the DOC's culture and environment for the benefit of all.

## CONTACTING US



**Website:** <https://ombudsman-madoc.org>

**Free Call:** 1-833-662-8410

Inquiries can be submitted anonymously through the website. If you choose to provide your contact information when filling out the web form, we will make every effort to respond within two business days. We look forward to addressing your infection control and wellness-related questions, concerns, and inquiries.

You may also submit your inquiries or suggestions via our telephone number. Infection control and wellness-related inquiries can be left anonymously. If you would like a response, please be sure to leave your contact information as instructed on the voicemail.