

View results

Respondent

22

Anonymous

3821:35

Time to complete

Inspection Information

1. Location *

Twin Towers

2. Date of Previous Inspection *

1/16/2024



3. Date of this Inspection *

3/30/2024



4. Time *

12:30pm

5. Location

Courts

Jails

Sheriff Station

Location



6. Commissioner(s) - (Select all that Apply) *

- Ingrid Archie
- Haley Broder
- Norma Cumpian
- Wynter Daggs
- Mark - Anthony Clayton Johnson
- Bob Frutos
- Dr. Cheryl N. Grills
- Eric J. Miller
- Raymond Regalado
- Alexander Sherman
- Joahanna Terrones
- Mary Veral
- Other

Facility Information

7. Facility Name *

Courthouse names and locations: <https://www.lacourt.org/courthouse>

Patrol Names and locations Stations: <https://lasd.org/stations/>

LA County Jail Facilities names and locations: <https://lasd.org/custody/>

Twin Towers Correctional Facility

8. Facility Address *

Courthouse names and locations: <https://www.lacourt.org/courthouse>

Patrol Names and locations Stations: <https://lasd.org/stations/>

LA County Jail Facilities names and locations: <https://lasd.org/custody/>

450 Bauchet Street,
Los Angeles CA90012

9. Name and Title of LASD Supervisor Contacted *

Watch Commander

10. Census: Capacity *

3200

11. Current Census *

2344

12. Location(s) Inspected: *

Module 141 Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown; Module 162 HOH Dorm

13. Issues reported to (Select all that Apply): *

- BOS
- Officer in Charge
- LASD
- ISD
- OIG
- COC
- Other

14. Name of the person(s) issues were reported to: *

Watch Commander

15. Contact Information of the person(s) contacted: *

450 Bauchet Street,
Los Angeles CA90012

Conditions of Confinement

16. **Condition of Confinement:** Cells/Toilets/Sinks

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

17. **Condition of Confinement:** Showers (water temperature, rust, mold etc.)

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

18. **Condition of Confinement:** Crowding

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

19. **Condition of Confinement:** Cleanliness/Graffiti

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

20. **Condition of Confinement:** Safety, Conflict, Tension

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

21. **Condition of Confinement:** Common Areas

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

22. **Condition of Confinement:** Air Quality/Temperature

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

23. **Condition of Confinement:** Deputy/Detainee Relations (Including Specific Incidents or allegations of misconduct)

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

24. **Conditions of Confinement COMMENT RE:** Deputy/Detainee Relations (Including Specific Incidents or allegations of misconduct)

see report at end

25. **Condition of Confinement:** Strip Search Issues

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

26. **Condition of Confinement:** Access (Drinking Water)

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

27. **Condition of Confinement:** Access (Mail/Reading Materials/Law Library)

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

28. **Condition of Confinement:** Access (Toilets for Common Room)

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

29. **Condition of Confinement:** Access (Toiletries, Appropriate Combs/Brushes)

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

30. **Condition of Confinement:** Access (Exercise, Religious Practice)

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

31. **Condition of Confinement:** Access (Legal Counsel)

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

32. **Condition of Confinement:** Access (Visitation, Correspondence)

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

33. **Condition of Confinement:** Solitary Confinement

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

34. **Condition of Confinement:** Privacy/Dignity (showers, bathrooms)

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

35. **Condition of Confinement:** Special needs populations (pregnant, non-ambulatory, hearing impaired, mentally ill, medical conditions, developmental disability)

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

36. **Condition of Confinement:** Module Information Postings (re: time calculations, complaint, developmental disability)

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

37. **Condition of Confinement:** Complaint Procedure (e.g., Deputy, Medical Complaints - Confidential Procedures to SBC, OIG, COC)

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

38. **Condition of Confinement:** Fees Assessed/ Money on Books

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

39. **Condition of Confinement:** Other

40. **Condition of Confinement:** Other

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

Nutrition

41. **Nutrition:** Quality/Concerns

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

42. **Nutrition COMMENT RE:** Quality/Concerns

43. **Nutrition:** Access to special diets

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

Trustees

44. **Trustees:** Quarters

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

45. **Trustees:** Training and Selection

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

46. **Trustees:** Workload and Hours

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

47. **Trustees:** Calculation/Time Served

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

Medical Services

48. **Medical Services**

	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Corrective Action Needed	Not Applicable
Access	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wait Times	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Responsiveness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
TB and Other Medical Screening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Dental	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Vision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Infectious Disease Protocol	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

49. **COMMENTS RE:** Medical

Mental Health

50. **Mental Health Services**

	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Corrective Action Needed	Not Applicable
Access	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wait Times	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Treatment Options	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assessment Procedures	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

51. **COMMENTS RE: Mental Health**

See report at end

Telephones

52. **Telephones**

	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Corrective Action Needed	Not Applicable
Access	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Functionality	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

53. **COMMENTS RE: Telephones**

Education Based Incarceration Programming (EBI)

54. **Education Based Incarceration Programming (EBI)**

	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Corrective Action Needed	Not Applicable
Availability	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Type	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

55. **COMMENTS RE: EBI Programming**

See report at end

56. **EBI: Volunteer Services**

	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Corrective Action Needed	Not Applicable
Type	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Concerns	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

57. **COMMENTS RE EBI: Volunteer Services**

See report at end

Clean Clothing and Bedding

58. **Clean Clothing and Bedding** (including laundry practices)

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

Facilities/Maintenance

59. **Facilities/Maintenance: Back Log Unfilled Order(s)**

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

60. **Facilities/Maintenance COMMENTS RE: Back Log Unfilled Order(s)**

61. **Facilities/Maintenance:** Kitchen/Laundry

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

Deputy Staffing

62. **Deputy Staffing:** Quality of Interactions w/Detainees

	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Corrective Action Needed	Not Applicable
Use of Force (Last 30 days)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assault on Staff (Last 30 days)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff Training (MH, trauma informed etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

63. **Deputy Staffing COMMENTS RE:** Quality of Interactions w/Detainees

There are some issues with using the FIP/Stepdown Unit for certain training procedures. See report at end

64. **Detainee Complaints/Concerns COMMENTS:**

65. **Deputy Complaint/Concerns COMMENTS:**

66. **Prior Corrective Action Resolution:**

67. **Detainee Documentations** (e.g., intake/release, procedures):

	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Corrective Action Needed	Not Applicable
Classification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Logs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Detainee management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Exit interview - policies/procedure grievances	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Generated funds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

68. **Detainee Documentation COMMENTS:**

69. **Discipline Proceedings:**

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

Inspection: Special Focus

70. Inspection: Special Focus

	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Corrective Action Needed	Not Available
COC	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CHS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
DMH	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
DPH	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facilities	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Food Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
OIG	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

71. Inspection: Special Focus Request (Select all that Apply):

- COC
- Community
- CHS
- DMH
- DPH
- Facilities
- Food Services
- OIG
- N/A
- Other

72. Inspection: Special Focus Request Comments:

73. **Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Issues:**

- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Corrective Action Needed
- Not Applicable

74. **Other:**

INSPECTION DETAILS - ANCHORED TO SUMMARIZE #3 THROUGH #106

75. Inspection Detail for #:

Twin Towers Correctional Center houses a number of people with significant mental illness, designated P3: "Unstable due to significant mental illness; persistent danger of hurting self in less acute care setting; or recurrent violence due to emotional instability," or P4: "Severe debilitating symptoms; Meets LPS 5150 criteria for danger to self, others, or grave disability." These people qualify for "High Observation Housing. According to a September 3, 2015, Joint Settlement Agreement Regarding the Los Angeles County Jails; and Stipulated Order of Resolution entered into by the Department of Justice and Los Angeles County before Judge Dean Pregerson, a federal judge, "High Observation Housing" or 'HOH' refers to designated areas for prisoners with mental illness who require an intensive level of observation and care and/or safety precautions." which means that they are separated into one- or two-person cells, often clothed in suicide vests, rather than ordinary jail fatigues, provided limited programming, often while chained to a table or chair. Consistent with the Settlement Agreement, the Sheriff Deputies engage in safety checks of people with the designation of P3 or P4 every 15 minutes.

On December 19, 2022, Judge Pregerson entered an order granting Plaintiff United States' Notice of Motion and Motion for Court Order Setting Deadlines for Substantial Compliance with the 2015 Settlement Agreement. That order included provisions for the "Expansion of Stepdown Program." The order noted that the LA County "Jails have been operating "Stepdown" HOH units that serve individuals who previously received inpatient care in the Jails and others in the HOH population....These units, unlike standard HOH areas, allow individuals to spend most of the day outside their cells without restraints....They also provide improved programming, and a better care environment overall than standard HOH units....They are also better at preventing decompensation."

Part of the point of using Stepdown units rested on the finding that such units "should reduce the acuity of mental illness across the system, and thus help to reduce the demand on the Jails' overtaxed inpatient and HOH units, the two most impacted types of mental health housing." The Order then required Los Angeles County to "expand the number of operational Stepdown units according to the following schedule, which should be feasible based on their implementation plans:..."

- o 20 Stepdown pods by March 2024;
- o 28 Stepdown pods by March 2025."

On June 27, 2023, the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors passed a motion, sponsored by Supervisor Hilda Solis, Supporting the Expansion of FIP Stepdown and HOH Dorm Units the Los Angeles County Jails, which contained the following "requests":

1. Request that the Sheriff and direct the Department of Health Services (DHS) – Correctional Health Services (CHS) continue to expand rapidly the number of FIP Stepdown and HOH Dorm pods at TTCF and CRDF to a total of 20 pods by March 30, 2024...
2. Request that the Sheriff and Direct the Department of Health Services (DHS) – Correctional Health Services (CHS) continue to recruit volunteer Mental Health Assistants, including through recruitment and training initiatives, such as the Merit Masters program, at least two times per year, more if needed."

On February 21, 2024, the Office of Inspector General, published its first Report Back on Support for Mental Health Assistants in Furthering the Sustainability and Success of the Forensic In-Patient Stepdown Unit Program (Item No. 10, Agenda of November 21, 2023).

On the same date, February 21, 2024 Judge Pregerson entered another order, Granting Stipulation to Modify Court Order Setting Deadlines for Substantial Compliance.

76. Inspection Detail for #:

As part of that order, Judge Pregerson noted that "The County has begun expanding Stepdown units and currently operates 17 such units in the Jails," as well as expanding "its use of High Observation Housing dorms ("HOH Dorms") since the December 2022 order was entered. The County maintains that HOH Dorms are functionally equivalent to Stepdown units. According to the County, both unit types possess the same essential elements, including enhanced, unrestrained out-of-cell time; a therapeutic physical space with games, soft furniture, decorative art or plants, and other pro-social environmental features; consistent and specially trained custody and Correctional Health Services ("CHS") staff, and tailored treatment plans and programming. The County also maintains that HOH Dorms are easier to expand and can safely house more people than Stepdown units. On this basis, the County has asked the United States to agree to modify the December 2022 Order to allow the operational HOH Dorms to be credited toward the Stepdown unit requirement." On the basis of these representations, "The United States agrees that HOH Dorms may be credited toward the Stepdown requirement," and permitted a revised target of "18 such Stepdown units in operation by June 2025;"

It was against this background of litigation and transformation in the jails that we visited the Twin Towers Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown Unit, as well as one of the HOH dorms. A core goal of our visit was to understand how the Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown Unit worked, including a preliminary understanding of the coordination between the Sheriff's Department, Correctional Health Services, and the Mental Health Assistants who currently operate the Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown Unit, as well as to observe and understand the operation of the HOH Dorms.

At the Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown Unit we spoke primarily with Craigen Armstrong, who had worked for 7 years as Mental Health Assistant, had graduated as a Merit Master from the Education Based Incarceration program at Men's Central Jail, and is a co-author with Adrian Berumen of the book, *The Solution: Mental Health Assistants*. Mr. Armstrong described the process of selecting and training mental health assistants, as well as caring for people with significant mental health issues in the Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown Unit.

The Forensic In-Patient (FIP) Stepdown Unit is still a High Observation Unit with regular safety checks, but it has a distinctive and therapeutic appearance. It is immaculately clean, with floors painted by the Mental Health Assistants: as an ocean complete with fish, sunken ship, and treasure chest; as a space diorama with a small Millennium Falcon; and as a "Picasso" canvas—although it is more like a nascent Pollock with splashes of paint decorating the floor. All of this gives the unit a much more cheerful and relaxed appearance than the rest of the jail.

The people incarcerated in the Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown Unit kept their cells very clean. There was none of the graffiti that covers the walls of cells elsewhere in the High Observation Housing units of Twin Towers. The people in the cells were alert and calm and wore a version of the usual jail fatigues, rather than the usual blue suicide vest (a padded and somewhat uncomfortable poncho) which is often discarded, leaving many of the people on High Observation Housing elsewhere in Twin Towers languishing naked in their cells.

The unit has comfortable chairs and plants, and each pod is surrounded by books that the people incarcerated there can easily access. There are tables and dry-erase boards. In all but one of the five pods, the people incarcerated there are not handcuffed or chased when they engage in programming. The Mental Health Assistants work to ensure that people spend no more than a month programming in handcuffs before being moved to a pod where the people are not in restraints.

77. Inspection Detail for #:

We spoke with about eight Mental Health Assistants from 141 and 161 modules. The Mental Health Assistants included about three who were undergoing training. They spoke at length about the challenges this population of people presented and the sort of patience and discipline it took to be a Mental Health Assistant. The Mental Health Assistants' cells are unlocked so that they can respond to the needs of the people incarcerated in the unit throughout the night. One of the Mental Health Assistants told us that even though these call-outs can be challenging, it is better to address them immediately for the long term health of the people incarcerated there and the smooth running of the program.

Mr. Armstrong stressed that one of the core difficulties of working with this population of significantly mentally ill people is that these are people who no-one wants: no program within the jail, and often not even their families outside the jail.

Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown Unit looks and feels different because of the Mental Health Assistants.

For example, Mental Health Assistants ensure that the people incarcerated in the Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown Unit take their medication. That is a time-consuming process that requires persuasion and monitoring, including explaining to the incarcerated person the nature of their illness and the effect of their medication. In addition, some incarcerated people do not swallow their medication, but hide it in their cheeks or spit it out. Mental Health Assistants are skilled in spotting when incarcerated people do not take their medication. They have a special interest not shared by nurses or Deputies in ensuring that the people in Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown Unit take medication: if the patients do not, then they become unresponsive and sometimes aggressive or violent.

Deputy and nursing staff do not want to do pill call. Medication is distributed by staffed by Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN), who nurses trained in basic, specific nursing skills, and so not Registered Nurses (RN) with more advanced training and patient care planning skills. If an incarcerated person refuses their medication, then rather than persuading the person to take their medication, Deputies and nursing staff usually just keep on going. Both Deputies and nursing staff think that persuading incarcerated people to take their pills takes too long. Given these difficulties, there was significant turnover in the nursing staff assigned to Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown Unit.

Historically, Mental Health Assistants have had difficulties working with Deputies who take a more punitive approach. For example, the Mental Health Assistants developed an incentive program involving placing daily stars on a sheet outside each cell for every incarcerated person who performed basic hygiene functions. It was difficult to get people with severe mental illness to take care of themselves and their living conditions. The program would then provide the successful incarcerated people with some small food treats, such as cookies, at the weekend. LASD officers initially impeded program by removing star-sheets from outside the cells. It took the Mental Health Assistants a significant amount of work to persuade the Deputies not to pull down these sheets when they did their inspection rounds.

Another challenge is faced by LASD having deputies train in the Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown Unit. The Mental Health Assistants know patients and are able to deal with them without using restraints. On the one hand, starting Deputies' training in the Unit enables them to observe how well people with significant mental problems can succeed in the jail. However, because the training officer must ensure that the Deputies know the procedures that apply to other parts of the jail, trainees use restraints to move people incarcerated people around the Unit. We observed at least one person being moved in this way.

78. Inspection Detail for **OIG** Request Related to:

Some training officers treat upset patients as a training opportunity and put incarcerated people on discipline to teach the training officer how to write up infractions.

The Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown Unit is undergoing a period of significant turnover. The Unit Director used to be a dedicated psychiatric technician, Sarah Strong. However, she died in December 2023. Sergeant Flores, who used to oversee the program, has been promoted and is no longer with the Unit. One of the founders of the Mental Health Assistant program, Adrian Berumen, has returned to a State correctional facility. Even though the Board of Supervisors' motion and Judge Pregerson's order has led to visits from interns and psychiatric students but no long-term staffing of Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown Unit with psychiatric technician to replace Dr. Strong.

The proposed expansion has had significant effects on the Unit. Mental Health Assistants require 6 months of training to complete the program developed by Mr. Berumen and Mr. Armstrong, in conjunction with the former Director of the Felony Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown unit, Sarah Tong, who was a psychiatric technician. The Mental Health Assistants do not receive outside training.

After six months of training in the Unit, successful trainees would receive the designation "Certified Mental Health Assistant." Certification simply signified that an incarcerated person had completed the Mental Health Assistant course and received the certification. However, Correctional Health Services objected to the designation of "certified" and required the Mental Health Assistants to stop calling themselves certified. Now, they are called Inmate Mental Health Assistants (although some of the Deputies refer to them as "merit masters," which is the name of the Education-Based Incarceration program that they have completed before engaging in the rest of the Mental Health Assistant training program).

Until recently, a psychiatric technician, Sarah Tong was the director of the Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown Unit. However, Ms. Tong complained of lack of support from Correctional Health Services. According to Mr. Armstrong, Ms. Tong received more support from the sergeants overseeing the Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown Unit (Sergeant Flores) than Correctional Health Services. It appears that in the time since she died in December, Correctional Health Services has not appointed a new psychiatric technician to the Unit.

The previous process for selecting Mental Health Assistants was that Ms. Tong, the Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown Unit Sergeant, and the Mental Health Assistants would participate in selecting who becomes a Mental Health Assistant and how they are trained. The smooth running of the Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown Unit depends upon having Mental Health Assistants who understand from their own experience how incarcerated people relate to each other, what are their interests and incentives, and how they operate within the power-dynamics and politics of the jails. Mr. Armstrong suggested that people who do not understand or are not suited to dealing the difficulties presented by chronically ill inmates disrupt the Unit.

After the Board of Supervisors Motion and District-Court ordered expansion, Correctional Health Services and LASD are taking more of a role in controlling the selection of incarcerated people to serve as Mental Health Assistants. Correctional Health Services does not participate in the training program for Mental Health Assistants, but simply provides the Merit Masters program in Men's Central Jail.

Mr. Armstrong suggested that LASD and Correctional Health Services do not understand the training process for Mental Health Assistants and do not understand the unique challenges faced by individuals who are incarcerated in a jail setting in serving as Mental Health Assistants.

79. Inspection Detail for **COC** Request Related to:

Not every person who graduates from the Merit Master program in Men's Central Jail is capable of dealing with the challenges presented by treating the people in the Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown Unit. Now there is only limited participation from Mental Health Assistants

Under the new expansion agreement, LASD and Correctional Health Services require only graduation from the merit master program to qualify as a Mental Health Associate for the Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown Unit, as well as providing peer support training. However, Mr. Armstrong criticized LASD's over reliance on peer support, because that training does not address the nature of the various illnesses that the Mental Health Associates treat, and so does not provide all the required skills to become a Mental Health Professional. As Mr. Armstrong explained, that puts people at risk because merit master training on its own does not prepare people to be in a pod with low-functioning people with mental health problems.

Another effect of the new policy is limiting the pool of people who could qualify as Mental Health Assistants. One of LASD's policy goals is to try to find people who can receive good time credits for working in pods. However, given the jail population, there are relatively few people who qualify for prison credits. Other incentives already available include increased contact visits and to order certain goods from Amazon. However, Armstrong suggested that one of the real benefits is to work on oneself and to work away from the "politics" of the dorms and cells (including racial politics).

Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown Unit leaders wanted to create a Mental Health Assistant class in Men's Central Jail taught by the Mental Health Assistants themselves. Mr. Armstrong met with Dr. Hellman, the Educational Development Administrator at Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, about a year ago. However, Mr. Armstrong suggested the they were unable to get permission to teach merit master course.

The Mental Health Associates also partnered with Education-Based Incarceration (EBI) to help set up the Century Regional Detention Facility Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown Unit at the women's jail. Mr. Armstrong and the Mental Health Assistants at Twin Towers were teleconferencing with the women Mental Health Assistants to help with their training. However, when Lieutenant Hicks, who was involved in setting up the Century Regional Detention Facility program moved from Century Regional Detention Facility to Twin Towers, coordination with the Twin Towers Mental Health Assistants stopped. When Century Regional Detention Facility Mental Health Assistants asked for the same hot meals ration (two per day) as the Mental Health Assistants in Twin Towers, LASD leveled down and dropped the Twin Towers hot meal ration to one per day, rather than level up the women Mental Health Assistant's ration to two per day.

Part of the LASD resistance to allowing Mental Health Assistants to provide Education Based Incarceration training appears to stem from some a punitive orientation because of the Mental Health Assistant's criminal record.

80. Inspection Detail for **Community Request** Related to:

According to Mr. Armstrong, LASD has proposed introducing an alternative, phased model to replace current Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown Unit structure. In the phased model, each module would consist of are five dorms, A, B, C, D, and E dorms, each capable of housing 16 people in 8 two-person cells. The plan is to have a process of graduation from pod-to-pod in which an incarcerated person with severe mental illness is moves from E-dorm, where they are placed in a single cell, clothed in a suicide gown and allowed limited chained and handcuffed programming, to D-dorm, where they remain in a single cell, but now the clothed in prison fatigues and allowed limited chained and handcuffed programming, to C-dorm, where the incarcerated person is able to share a cell and receives more programming, but still chained and handcuffed, to B dorm, which is the Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown Unit, in which the incarcerated person is no longer chained and handcuffed on programming and receives attention from a Mental Health Assistant, and finally to A-Dorm where the incarcerated person no longer is afforded the assistance of a Mental Health Assistant.

There has been no formal meeting between the Mental Health Assistants and the watch commander or captains to discuss expansion of the program. If there are meetings, these are facilitated by the Office of Inspector General. The most contact that the Mental Health Assistants have with LASD and Correctional Health Services is at at the ceremony for graduating inmates when they exit the Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown Unit. Otherwise, Correctional Health Services rarely show up in the Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown Unit.

Commissioners Miller and Frutos also visited Module 162 pod A. Pod A is one of the "High Observation Housing dorms ("HOH Dorms")...[that t]he County maintains...are functionally equivalent to Stepdown units." The LASD Deputies in the dorm informed us that, because we visited on a weekend, none of the people incarcerated in Pod A were allowed out of their cells until Monday. When the people incarcerated there were allowed out of their cells during the week, they could receive three hours unrestrained in the morning and three hours in the afternoon, during which time they would receive counseling with the mental health staff. However, only those people who were cooperative would receive this out-of-cell time. Of the 25 people incarcerated in the HOH dorm, only 6 were deemed cooperative at the last session.

When we spoke to the people incarcerated there, they were significantly less comfortable than the people in the Forensic Inpatient (FIP) Stepdown Unit. The cells were covered in graffiti and were generally less clean. In one room, the occupant had made a tent of blankets so that we could not see him in his bed. A Deputy on the mandatory 15-minute safety check preceded us and logged the room as checked without being able to see the person in the cell or ascertain their health status of safety.

81. **Inspection Detail:** EBI

82. **Inspection Detail:** Medical

83. **Inspection Detail:** Medical

84. **Inspection Detail:** Building and Maintenance *(Select all that apply)*

- Lawns
- Recreation Area
- Blacktop
- Asphalt
- General Condition
- Paint
- Roof
- Drains/Gutters
- Not Applicable
- Other

85. Inspection Detail: Building and Maintenance

INSPECTION DETAIL: INTERIOR OF BUILDINGS(S)

86. **Inspection Detail:** Interior of Building(s) and Maintenance *(Select all that apply)*

- Walls
- Paint
- Floors
- Drains
- Plumbing fixtures working
- Air Vents
- Windows
- Not Applicable
- Other

87. Inspection Detail **Interior of Building:**

88. Are Cleaning fluids and chemicals labeled and safely stored?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable
- Other

89. Weapons locker present?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable
- Other

90. Recreation/Sports Equipment:

91. Are the hallways clear, are doors propped open or closed?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable
- Other

92. Holding areas (cells/rooms), is there access to drinking water and toilet?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable
- Other

93. Condition of individual cells/rooms, or dormitories:

94. Beds - Type of bed and is it off the floor?

95. Adequate lighting:

96. Temperature:

97. Narrative Report