

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



PRESS RELEASE

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DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS' IMPLEMENTS SUICIDE PREVENTION STRATEGIES BASED ON NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

(Washington D.C.) Director Tom Faust announced today that there has been significant progress made in enhancing suicide prevention protocols within D.C. Department of Corrections' facilities. According to Director Faust, "while we have worked diligently to address suicide prevention, there is still work to be done in tackling this issue which impacts correctional facilities throughout the country." Following the occurrence of three D.C. Jail suicides in 2013, Director Faust called for an immediate top to bottom review of both custody and medical policies/practices within the Department. As part of this process, he convened a behavioral health task force to evaluate the medical and mental health screening of inmates and review custodial practices associated with suicide prevention. Subject matter experts on suicide prevention in jails and prisons, recommended by the National Institute of Corrections and the Federal Bureau of Prisons, were also brought in to conduct in-depth examinations of key jail functions including intake screening and assessment, communication, housing, supervision, intervention, training, reporting, and follow-up.

In response to work done so far, the Department has instituted a number of operational enhancements to better safeguard the offender population. Director Faust will provide detailed information on progress to date during his hearing on November 7th before the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety chaired by Councilmember Tommy Wells. The assessment reports will be posted on the Department's website at www.doc.dc.gov

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