



HELPING SHED LIGHT ON THE OBSTACLES PREVENTING OUR JUSTICE SYSTEM FROM BEING JUST.

June 1, 2022

Eric Williams
Interim Warden
FCI Fort Dix
PO Box 38
Joint Base MDL, NJ 08640

cc: The Honorable Cory Booker
United States Senator
717 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bob Menendez
United States Senator
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Andy Kim
United States Representative
2444 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Warden Williams:

As you know, substance abuse and incarceration go hand in hand in America. A decade ago, studies showed that almost two-thirds—64.5 percent—of the 2.3 million people behind bars in the U.S. suffered from an alcohol- or drug-use disorder.¹ Optimistically, this percentage is probably about the same today.

Thankfully, the Bureau of Prisons hasn't turned a blind eye to the substance-abuse issues overwhelming our country's prisons. The most effective way the BOP helps in the fight against substance abuse is through the Residential Drug Abuse Program it offers at several dozen BOP facilities.

As the BOP's own website recognizes, "RDAP is the Bureau's most intensive treatment program."² Indeed, "studies ... suggest that the Bureau's RDAPs make a significant difference in the lives of offenders following their release from custody and return to the community."³ This is because "[r]esearch findings demonstrate[] that RDAP participants are significantly less likely to recidivate and less likely to relapse to drug use than non-participants."⁴

While RDAP is only available at some of the BOP's facilities, the State of New Jersey is fortunate enough to be home to two of those locations: FCI Fairton and FCI Fort Dix.

¹ "Behind Bars II: Substance Abuse and America's Prison Population," *The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University* (February 2010), available at <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED509000.pdf>.

² "Substance Abuse Treatment," *Federal Bureau of Prisons*, available at https://www.bop.gov/inmates/custody_and_care/substance_abuse_treatment.jsp (last visited May 25, 2022).

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

Unlike FCI Fairton, which only houses around 800 men, your facility currently holds more than 3,000 men. Using the 64.5-percent statistic referenced above, there are likely 2,000 men in your care suffering from substance abuse. The best way to help these men and ensure that they don't return to your facility in the future is by making sure that everyone who is eligible for RDAP can, in fact, participate in it.

The purpose of this letter is to bring to your attention some concerns we've heard from several men and their loved ones about the current status of RDAP in your facility. These men and their loved ones are under the impression that, while the men have already been determined to be eligible for and have been accepted into RDAP, nothing has happened after that point. Put more bluntly, no actual treatment is taking place.

If true, these concerns are alarming. Again, it's likely that approximately 2,000 of the men in your care suffer from substance abuse. While we appreciate that it's not practical for all 2,000 men to participate in RDAP at once and immediately, we strongly believe that the treatment that comes with RDAP is essential to reduce recidivism at a time when many Americans don't feel safe in the U.S.⁵

But you don't have to take our word for it. The BOP can listen to itself: "the Bureau's RDAPs make a significant difference in the lives of offenders following their release from custody and return to the community" because "RDAP participants are significantly less likely to recidivate and less likely to relapse to drug use than non-participants."⁶

Thank you for your time and understanding on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Peter J. Tomasek
Editor-in-Chief, Interrogating Justice

⁵ See, e.g., Elaa Elassar, "New Yorkers don't feel safe at home anymore," *CNN* (May 2, 2022), available at <https://www.cnn.com/2022/04/30/us/new-york-crime-safety-fears/index.html>.

⁶ Substance Abuse Treatment," *Federal Bureau of Prisons*, available at https://www.bop.gov/inmates/custody_and_care/substance_abuse_treatment.jsp (last visited May 25, 2022).

