

**"A Message from the Inspector General: Inspection of the BOP's Federal Medical Center Devens,"  
December 2024**

Hello, I'm Michael Horowitz, Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Justice.

In April of this year, my office conducted our fifth unannounced inspection of a Federal Bureau of Prisons, or BOP, institution, and our first inspection of a Federal Medical Center, or FMC. FMC Devens houses inmates with serious medical or mental health conditions, and we identified several critical operational deficiencies during our Inspection.

First, there was a significant shortage of healthcare employees at FMC Devens. We found it particularly concerning that after the Clinical Director retired in June 2024, FMC Devens had only 1 physician at the institution to provide daily patient care for over 900 inmates. Additionally, there were vacancies in nearly half of the institution's pharmacy positions and about a quarter of its nursing positions. Overall, the Health Services Department was staffed at only 76 percent.

We also identified concerns related to the quality of healthcare provided to inmates, including potentially dangerous practices related to the distribution of buprenorphine and naloxone, and inconsistent processes for routine healthcare screenings and requesting and accessing care. Additionally, we found issues with diabetes management, improper placement of some inmates in the Memory Disorder Unit, and a backlog of outside medical visits.

Staffing shortages in other areas impacted operations at FMC Devens. For example, staffing shortages in Psychology Services and Education limited opportunities for inmates to participate in programs designed to prepare them for successful reentry. FMC Devens received FIRST STEP Act funds to implement a LifeSkills Laboratory to help inmates with serious mental illnesses develop daily life skills. However, as of October 2024, FMC Devens had yet to enroll any inmates in the program.

Additionally, we identified concerns related to safety and security. For example, we found that Correctional Officers failed to complete all the required inmate-monitoring rounds, leaving vulnerable inmates unobserved for multiple hours each night, including inmates in a mental health unit, the hospital unit, and the Memory Disorder Unit. Inmates housed in these units pose an increased risk not only for self-harm and suicide, but also for medical-related emergencies such as seizures and falls.

Finally, we found that FMC Devens's physical infrastructure needed about \$15 million dollars in repairs. We are concerned that if these repairs are not made soon, equipment will fail, which would affect the conditions of confinement and incur additional costs.

The findings in today's report are consistent with what we've seen in prior unannounced inspections, including serious staffing shortages, and crumbling infrastructure. These issues have a cascading effect on the BOP's ability to provide safe and humane conditions of confinement and to provide inmates with resources to prepare them for successful reentry.

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We made 11 recommendations to ensure effective operations and safe conditions of confinement at FMC Devens. To read the report, please visit our website, [oig.justice.gov](https://oig.justice.gov), or go to [oversight.gov](https://oversight.gov).

Thank you for joining me today.

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