

# **SAN QUENTIN MEDICAL NEWS**

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**UPDATES AND INFORMATION FROM SAN QUENTIN LEADERSHIP AND THE  
FEDERAL RECEIVER FOR PRISON MEDICAL CARE**

*ATTENTION STAFF: WE NEED A NAME FOR OUR HEALTH SERVICES NEWSLETTER. PLEASE  
SEND YOUR SUGGESTIONS TO JANET SPENCER IN NEUMILLER.*

## **MESSAGE FROM JAYNE RUSSELL, RECEIVER'S SAN QUENTIN PROGRAM MANAGER**

We can make a difference at San Quentin, but it's going to take all of us to do our part. I've seen many positive changes and strengths in the staff and programs in the few short months I have been here. For instance, we now have a weekly Quality Management Committee and new Quality Teams to tackle specific problems.

Do we have a tough road ahead? You bet! Anything that is worth doing well will take our combined energy, effort and commitment. There are many challenges, and I know that we all have felt the impact professionally as well as personally. Long work hours, changes in routine and staff -- both losses and new people -- can affect our daily lives and home life as well.

The small improvements and changes so far are magnified for the inmates who live here and depend upon our services. We are here to provide constitutionally required medical care. But more than that, we staff members must perform out of integrity and pride, to do the best that we can. What we do individually and together matters, and I ask each one of you to join in helping us raise the level of health care professionalism and living and working conditions at SQ. There is no better time than now to make a difference.

## **MESSAGE FROM WARDEN ROBERT AYERS**

As we enter the New Year I would like to take a moment to acknowledge all the hard, often dangerous work you do at San Quentin. I extend my sincere and deep appreciation to each and every one of you. Our challenges continue to expand as the institution grows, but one objective remains at the forefront: the safety and security of the staff, the general public and the incarcerated in our charge. As part of that, we must stay focused on ensuring our medical health system is meeting constitutional standards.

## **RECEIVER'S SAN QUENTIN PROJECT UPDATES**

- We have developed a new Reception Intake process where all incoming inmates will be seen on the first day of arrival by medical, dental and mental health staff. We need proper space for these changes and will soon be renovating the Reception Center.
- Routine monitoring of cleanliness and kitchen standards has begun, to help lessen the threat of spreading disease.
- Construction is underway for a new TTA in Neumiller to provide more space for staff and inmate patients, with room for more medical equipment. We expect the improved space to be ready in late March.
- The creation of additional parking spaces will ease the crunch for custody and medical staff coming to work each day.
- We are developing a new model for medical services to provide care on time to inmate patients and keep track of those with serious health care needs.

## **INMATES: HOW TO USE YOUR PATIENT ADVOCATE**

San Quentin now has a patient advocacy program to help handle medical appeals. The new approach works to speed up response time and adds an early look at appeals by medical staff. Every morning, two Registered Nurse Patient Advocates read all new medical appeals, responding to emergent issues that day and urgent ones within 24 hours. For this program to work, everyone must play by the rules. That means:

- ✓ DO NOT use medical appeals (green 602s, yellow 1824s) forms as a substitute for sick call. Continue to use the sick call process as usual, and file an appeal only when you have a complaint or disagreement.
- ✓ DO limit your appeal to one issue at a time.
- ✓ DO NOT file multiple appeals on the same issue.
- ✓ DO write a simple and specific statement about your medical complaint and how you would like it handled. Avoid adding vague or general comments.
- ✓ DO NOT mix medical and non-medical topics in a single appeal. The nurse advocate can only help you with medical issues.

## **MEDICAL STAFFING AND RECRUITMENT UPDATE**

During the past months we have been very busy interviewing and hiring new employees to join our team, and reduce our use of temporary and contract staff. We have brought on board and are in the process of hiring new Office Technicians, Licensed Vocational Nurses, Registered Nurses, Nursing Supervisors and others. Some of our incoming crew include Gisselle Matteson, Chief of Support Operations; Bill Cady, Staff Counsel; Sylvia Pulido, Environmental Services; and Lanette Corona, Administrative Assistant to Nursing. Welcome to all! It will be an exciting year, and we are still looking for some good people to fill positions.

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## **AN UNWELCOME VISITOR: NOROVIRUS**

An outbreak of Norovirus hit San Quentin hard in late December and January. The disease affected about 900 inmates and 50 staff. It was a difficult time for everyone and put us "on hold" for several weeks, closing down movement, programs, visiting and reception activities. That was necessary due to the risk of contamination both inside and outside the prison. We had expert input and daily briefings with our medical staff as well as state and county health departments. The medical staff did an excellent job responding to this crisis, and we would not have succeeded without the cooperation and integration of custody staff that vigilantly met with us daily and went the extra mile. Despite the volume of cases, the severity was relatively mild. Congratulations to all for a job well done.

### **VIRUS VERSE**

*Late in December  
Past Christmas Day,  
Norovirus came to stay.  
Ho Ho Ho turned into Go Go Go!  
As nurses interviewed face to face,  
Custody moved space after space,  
Schedules and lists were daily made,  
Until the virus began to fade.  
Staff came forward day by day,  
And offered help in every way.  
Thanks to many, thanks to all,  
Who gave an answer to our call.*

- Tonya Church, Director of Nurses

### **MEETING THE MAC**

Following the Norovirus outbreak, San Quentin CMO Karen Saylor, Associate Warden Jim Allen, the Receiver's Program Manager Jayne Russell and Director of Custody Support Services Joe McGrath met with the Men's Advisory Council to discuss the experience and concerns of inmates. From that discussion came a plan to work with Warden Ayers to strengthen cleanliness, inspection and monitoring of the SQ kitchen and food handling practices. Thanks for the input, folks