

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

CALIFORNIA MEDICAL FACILITY

VACAVILLE, CA 95696-2000

(707) 448-6841



February 10, 1998

Mr. Scott Cozza
Ad Hoc Committee
Prison Health Care Reform

Dear Mr. Cozza,

Thank you for your letter dated January 21, 1998, concerning the treatment of "Transgender" inmates at the California Medical Facility (CMF). In your letter you have raised twelve (12) issues relative to the treatment of "Transgender" inmates. You have requested a meeting with CMF staff to discuss your concerns.

The California Department of Corrections identifies transgender inmates in terms of "gender dysphoria." Therefore, I will respond to the items discussed utilizing the term "gender dysphoria" as opposed to the term "transgender" or "TG."

Issue One

Correctional Officers receive training in Staff/Inmate Relations and Sexual Harassment/Sexual Orientation. In these classes, staff are advised that discrimination or harassment based on gender or sexual orientation will not be tolerated. Additionally, staff and inmates are required to treat one another with respect and dignity. Your letter fails to provide any specific instances of mistreatment of any inmate.

It is important to note that it is not the role or function of Correctional Officers to understand the psychological-bio issues of inmates; it is their role to provide security functions. The psychological-bio needs of inmates are addressed by clinical staff.

Issue Two

CMF does have mental health staff available to deal with the mental health needs of all inmates. The mental health treatment teams consistently treat inmates with dignity and respect.

Issue Three

CMF has a variety of medical clinics which address the medical needs of the inmate population. Furthermore, if CMF is unable to provide necessary specialized services, outside consultants will be utilized.

Additionally, CMF has a "Gender Dysphoria" Committee composed of medical and mental health professionals, whose function is to address the needs of genetically male inmates who may have problems of gender dysphoria. The committee makes recommendations for treatment or nontreatment which includes the assessment of prior use of sex hormones. The committee makes appropriate referrals for psychological evaluations to assess the inmate's mental status and/or the appropriateness of further hormone treatment from the standpoint of psychological factors.

Issue Four

The majority of gender dysphoria inmates are housed in single cells in Unit IV. Those inmates whose mental health treatment needs override their gender dysphoria diagnosis are housed in a psychiatric unit with a mutually agreed upon cellmate consistent with Departmental rules. Your letter fails to list specific cases where inmates have been "raped and emotionally abused."

Issue Five

Gender Dysphoria inmates are not the only non-HIV positive inmates housed in Unit IV. Additionally, as mentioned, the gender dysphoria inmates housed in Unit IV are celled alone. Therefore, it is irresponsible to suggest that any HIV negative inmate living in a unit with HIV positive inmates is at a greater risk for the spread of the HIV virus.

Issue Six

The Department's "Scope of Medical Services" states that the use of feminizing hormones for "male" inmates are not indicated and are limited to female related disorders, such as:

- Treatment for menstrual symptoms
- Prevention of osteoporosis
- Control of fertility
- Management of dysfunctional uterine bleeding
- Treatment of breast cancer
- Treatment of prostate cancer

However, inmates identified with gender dysphoria are evaluated for the prior use of sex hormones and the need to continue such hormones. If discontinuation of hormones is considered, medical staff assess the risk for negative consequences of such discontinuation.

Issue Seven

A discussion with the Gender Dysphoria Committee reveals there have been no recent requests for a gender dysphoria group. Inmates have access to individual therapy and a group would be considered if inmate requests demonstrate such a need. Refer to response to Issue Six relative to HIV/AIDS inmates and sex hormones. *

Issue Eight

The Departmental Operations Manual (DOM) does address Gender Dysphoria Treatment in DOM section 54060.46.

Issue Nine

All inmates received into CMF are provided with peer education relative to AIDS and the HIV virus. Additionally, all inmates have access to medical personnel for additional health information.

Issue Ten

All incarcerated inmates, not just gender dysphoria inmates, should be protected from sexual assault, physical and verbal abuse. CMF has a Victim/Predator program with the specific intent of evaluating housing criteria to avoid victimization. Please refer to Issue Four for additional input.

Issue Eleven

The California Code of Regulations provides specific ranges for discipline based on the severity of the rule violation. These ranges mandate that inmates receive similar punishment for similar offenses. Your letter fails to provide specific instances where inmates of any category receive more severe penalties than their peers for similar offenses.

Issue Twelve

Inmates confined in male institutions are mandated by grooming codes as set forth by the California Code of Regulations. Inmates in male institutions are not permitted to wear makeup. Additionally, all inmates at CMF are required to conform to the Inmate Personal Property Operational Plan which dictates the allowable personal clothing at CMF. Inmates who have enlarged breasts in an attempt to appear feminine are **required** to wear a brassiere.

Inmates housed in a male institution are subject to routine, unclothed body searches by male staff.

In closing, I hope that this answers the questions you have raised. Additionally, we are attempting to set up a meeting between CMF and your organization as you requested. Should you have any additional questions, please contact Terri McDonald, Administrative Assistant, at (707)449-6509.


ANA M. RAMIREZ PALMER
Warden

cc: State Senator John Burton
State Senator John Vasconcellos
Assemblywoman Carole Migden
Assemblywoman Sheila Kuehl