



February 1, 2019 FFNF Highlights

Lancaster County Prison

Cheryl Steberger, Warden – Lancaster County Prison

- During her 20-year career at the Lancaster County Prison, Warden Steberger was its first female lieutenant and major. In 2016 she became the first female warden. She stands out for her passion for the jail's mission and its staff and her compassion for those behind bars. Warden Steberger is supported by the prison board. All three City Commissioners serve on the Board.
- The present building is architecturally beautiful but provides many challenges to effective prison management. The prison was built in 1865 with a high rise multi-story addition in 1991.
- Today there are 847 inmates. Approximately 140 of them are women. The average stay is 76 days.
- There is a big push for suicide prevention in the prison. The prison is part of the Suicide Prevention Task Force in Lancaster County. This organization includes civilians, professors from Millersville University, County Commissioner Parsons, and Behavioral Health and Mental Services. The prison staff has been trained in suicide prevention tactics. In 2018 there were two attempted suicides and one successful suicide in the prison. During 2018 1,049 prisoners were on suicide watch.
- Another key focus of the prison is Mental Illness and Substance Abuse (MISA). There has been a significant push to help prisoners with mental health issues. The prison works to direct inmates to the appropriate services so they are not released back to the streets while still suffering from a mental illness. Within the prison, mentally ill inmates are more likely to cause an assault than an inmate without a mental illness. Correctional officers have been trained to respond to these concerns. The prison won an award for its work with mentally ill inmates.

- Employee morale has also been a focus of the warden's during her tenure. She has worked on staffing the prison adequately so as to avoid overworking employees or putting them in dangerous situations. She encourages correctional officers to reach out to their family and friends to find new employees. There are currently 206 correctional officers out of the 226 budgeted. Employee morale has greatly improved during her tenure and overtime has been reduced.
- When Warden Steberger took charge, she reexamined how the prison records were maintained. There were unorganized stacks of paper throughout the office. The records office is now well organized and other municipal prison wardens have come to look at it as an example.
- The opioid epidemic has had an impact on the prison and the prison population. Inmates, families, and staff have been caught smuggling drugs into the prison. As a result the prison has changed visitation to be non-contact only. The prison is also considering the purchase of a body scanner.
- In order to reduce the frequency of prisoner transportation, a video conferencing system was installed for prisoners to appear before a judge from the prison. This is used for deposition and sentencing.
- The prison offers many programs to prisoners such as: medical health care, mental health care, male and female work release programs, education classes, GED testing, Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, sexual assault counseling, parenting skills classes, and church services. In 2018, prison physicians performed 2,164 psychiatric evaluations and 3,519 prisoners were on psychotropic medication.
- Warden Steberger explained the need for a new prison. The current prison is not adequate for the needs of the population. The building is not climate controlled and gets very hot in the summer and very cold in the winter. There is a need for more space for mentorship and reentry programs. The building is also not handicap accessible. A new prison should be linear, on one floor, so there is no need for elevators. The prison should also have more natural light and provide spaces for important reentry programs.
- The annual budget for the prison is \$28 million. The cost per inmate is \$96 per day. The average cost per meal is \$1.12.