

Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition (MPAC)  
maineprisoneradvocacy.org

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*PO Box 873 . Ellsworth, ME 04605*

July 3, 2012

Thanks for your letter. We're sending this informational letter in response since it can reach you sooner than a longer individualized letter. M-PAC members would like to send longer letters, yet available time causes unacceptable delays. Please know that your information and issues are read and used for advocacy in many ways. Our goals and plans are based on what we learn from people on the inside.

A few updates on some advocacy issues. We will have a meeting at MDOC offices later in July to talk about canteen and phone issues, as well as a longer meeting that day about general and individual advocacy issues.

We've seen comparative lists for Keefe products in MA and ME. One of our M-PAC volunteers is reviewing what has happened with phones in the past few years (i.e. the attempted legislation, the PUC lawsuit and court ruling). We don't have enough volunteers to make a major push on phones or Keefe; but we can keep highlighting these issues and appealing for fairness. These problems affect everyone, particularly families of incarcerated men and women.

Medical issues have been at the forefront with M-PAC for a long time, as they have been deeply problematic. We're aware of new healthcare providers and are in communication with CCS and DOC. We are relieved to know that certain medical personnel are no longer there. We're guardedly hopeful that things might improve with medical services and look forward to more information.

When people send us info on medical problems, we prepare reports for the Commissioner and/or others. We know that standards of care have been very low. M-PAC can't enforce health treatment – we can only report, recommend, and also forward issues, if it becomes necessary, to Dept of Justice and elsewhere. We're also aware of people who lack required mobility.

The slowdown on daily schedules is something we continue to bring up when we have meetings with the DOC. We can do little to change the slowdown "security" issues, but we have continued to note these problems for the Commissioner since the slowdowns started getting worse. It is very unfortunate that movement takes so long due to patdowns, general slowdowns, etc, since it cuts into positive and essential aspects of life there. It's always good to hear about this, since top administration may not know every detail of what's happening in a facility.

We expect changes soon in the public database for all prisoners and probationers in Maine that was first placed on the MDOC website a few months ago. We'll report on that when it happens.

Some of our members have also been meeting for over a year with the MDOC policy workgroups to advocate improvements for the SMU, MHU, and more. There are many other areas that M-PAC is involved in right now. We work – along with you – for best possible outcomes and better conditions.

With good wishes,

Jim Bergin and Judy Garvey, Co-Coordiators