

## APPROVED MINUTES

### HOUSE AND SENATE COMMITTEES ON STATE AGENCIES AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

#### MEETING JOINTLY

**Tuesday, April 24, 2018**

The House and Senate Committees on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs met jointly on Tuesday, April 24, 2018, at 1:30 p.m. at the Wrightsville Unit – Arkansas Department of Correction in Wrightsville, Arkansas.

**Committee Members Present: Senators** Gary Stubblefield, Vice-Chair; Trent Garner, Missy Irvin, and David Wallace. **Representatives** Kenneth Ferguson, Justin Gonzales, Kim Hammer, Kim Hendren, Josh Miller, Brandt Smith, and Dwight Tosh.

**Other Legislators Present: Representatives** Vivian Flowers, Aaron Pilkington, Johnny Rye, and Danny Watson.

Senator Stubblefield called the meeting to order.

#### **Discussion of Information Related to Synthetic Marijuana** [Handout 1]

**Mrs. Wendy Kelley, Director, Arkansas Department of Correction**, stated the per calendar year incidents relating to synthetic marijuana in 2017 was 1,136. However, in late 2017, the Arkansas Department of Correction (ADC) implemented additional procedures regarding contraband as a result of those procedures the first quarter of 2018 ADC had 153 incidents relating to synthetic marijuana which is down from an average of 95 incidents a month to 51 incidents a month. Director Kelley stated the number of incidents is still high but it is a step in the right direction. Synthetic marijuana (K2) is toxic and lethal. One inmate took one hit off of a K2 cigarette and died. Some inmates have gotten sick off of it and stated they will never touch K2 again. K2 is very hard to detect because of the altered chemical forms. .

#### **Discussion of Efforts Related to Contraband Interdiction** [Handouts 2-4]

**Mr. Dexter Payne, Deputy Director, Arkansas Department of Correction**, discussed ADC's efforts relating to contraband interdiction. ADC has added signage all over every unit including the visitation areas and the viewing areas to tell inmates how dangerous K2 is and how it affects the inmates and their families. They have also added warning information to their website. Mr. Payne stated K2 is getting in the prison system by people throwing it over the fence, staff bring it in, family members bring it in, and through the mail. They have terminated staff for bring it in to the facilities. Additionally, the maximum security units have brand new body imaging machines such as the ones at the airport. The Tucker Unit is making a unique video regarding K2 with interviews from people who have used K2. The inmates discuss negative effects of using the drug. The K9 team has helped tremendously as they are sent out triple the amount of times that

normally would have to search for drugs. Another great policy change is changing our policy on receiving mail. Now when the mail comes in ADC copies the mail and the inmates receive the copy of the mail versus the original letter. This is because families or friends were soaking the letters in K2 and the inmates would ingest it. ADC started copying the mail back in August 2017 and K2 related incidents have gone down tremendously.

### **Discussion of Substance Abuse Treatment Programs at the Department of Correction**

**Mr. Mark Cashion, ADC Assistant Director**, provided an overview of the substance abuse treatment programs. There are approximately 787 drug treatment beds within ADC. They are located at six different facilities. There are different level of treatment, it varies from four months to six months programs. There is also a substance abuse therapeutic community program that is a 9-to-12 month residential treatment program. There are 224 treatment beds at the Tucker Unit, Wrightsville Unit and the McPherson Unit. This program uses cognitive behavioral treatment methods and recovering peer mentors to assist the mental health staff. The Committees heard from two peer mentors located at the Wrightsville Unit.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.