



News for Immediate Release

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Corrections' Compliance Manager Named for Prison Rape Elimination Act

Harrisburg – The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections has taken steps to ensure compliance with Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) changes by contracting with Jennifer Feicht to serve as its compliance manager/statewide coordinator.

“Contracting with Jennifer is in line with Gov. Tom Corbett’s commitment to eliminating all victimization within our prison system,” Corrections Secretary John Wetzel said. “While we have followed PREA standards, the recent changes call for improvements, and I am confident that Jennifer will lead the agency in the right direction.”

The contract, which was effective beginning Dec. 10, 2012, is for a period of three years.

There are many changes to PREA. For example, each facility is required to have a PREA coordinator and will be subject to PREA audits. In addition, reporting procedures will be impacted as will the department’s current method of searching inmates.

As PREA compliance manager/statewide coordinator, Feicht will be responsible for:

- Directing the administration and all pertinent aspects of the Prison Rape Elimination Act program statewide;
- Providing technical assistance regarding the program management on a department-wide basis, as well as external stakeholders;
- Monitoring the implementation process of the project;
- Supervising research and data collection regarding prison rape and sexual violence in prisons;
- Providing assistance in key investigations;
- Preparing reports for Department of Corrections’ secretary and executive staff; and
- Overseeing the preparation and presentation of program specific training to offender and staff populations.

“Jennifer will have access to agency and facility senior staff on a regular basis and will have the authority to work with staff, managers and supervisors to effectuate change if necessary,” Wetzel added.

Feicht previously worked for the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR) as a contract liaison and a prison project consultant. She has a background of working to enhance the response to crime victims, communities and offenders through research, training and technical assistance.

She also served as a project assessment and technical assistance consultant with the Coalition of Pennsylvania Crime Victims Organizations; as executive director of the Victim's Resource Center Inc. in Venango County; and as direct services supervisor and prevention/education coordinator for PASSAGES, Inc. in Clarion County.

Feicht, who graduated from Clarion University with a degree in psychology, has served on the board of directors for the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape and the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence. She also served on the Keystone Crisis Intervention Team with the National Organization of Victim's Assistance.

As part of the DOC's PREA efforts, the agency also recently contracted with the Moss Group, Washington, D.C., to evaluate several state prisons to determine the DOC's effectiveness in PREA training. This evaluation, which is conducted by experienced practitioners, is expected to:

- Identify and isolate management and operational practices that can contribute to increased incidences of sexual assault
- Identify areas where policy, practice and staff/offender culture either enhance or hinder inmate sexual safety
- Identify trends and perspectives of facility staff in reporting and responding to sexual abuse, with specific focus on the reporting culture
- Identify trends and perspectives of the offenders in reporting and responding to sexual abuse
- Review current departmental and institutional policies and procedures
- Conduct management and operational reviews of each facility in core areas of practice impacting sexual safety.

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