



**New York State Correctional Officers  
& Police Benevolent Association, Inc.**

***"Keeping New York Safe"***

## ***Multiple Inmate Fights Occur at Gouverneur Correctional Facility***

### ***Two Inmates Need Treatment at Local Hospital, Weapons Seized***

#### **For Immediate Release**

***July 10, 2023***

**Gouverneur, NY** – Five inmate on inmate fights occurred in the past two weeks at the medium security correctional facility, sending two inmates to a local hospital for their injuries and several other inmates cut by make shift weapons.

On Friday, June 30, an officer making rounds in one of the facility dorms observed one inmate on top of another inmate who was on the floor. The inmate was kicking the other inmate repeatedly. The officer activated her alarm. When additional staff arrived, they were able to stop the fight. During the investigation into the incident, it was determined that the fight began in the bathroom with two other inmates and it escalated out into the dorm area where the other inmates joined in. During the fight, one inmate took a chair and hit another inmate. Another inmate was cut with a make-shift weapon. The inmate who was on the ground being kicked, was also struck in the back of the head with a combination lock that was wrapped in a shirt.

Once the fights were stopped, all four inmates were escorted to the infirmary for treatment. The inmate who was hit with the combination lock was transported to Gouverneur Hospital for further treatment.

Officers recovered the combination lock and shirt, which was discarded on the floor near the officer's station.

The second fight occurred on Sunday, July 2. An inmate walked up to the officer's station in the dorm and had several lacerations to his body. He told the officer he was attacked by another unknown inmate in the bathroom. The injured inmate was escorted to the infirmary where he was treated for lacerations to his ear, both arms and back.

The lacerations were consistent with a cutting type weapon.

Officers were not able to identify the attacker.

The following day, in the Residential Rehabilitation Unit (RRU) program, an officer observed two inmates exchanging punches. Both inmates continued to fight and ignored the officer's orders to separate. The officer administered OC spray, which was effective. The two inmates separated and were removed from the classroom. After decontamination, they were returned to their cells and face disciplinary charges.

On the same day, an officer conducting rounds in one of the dorms observed two inmates exchanging punches. Ignoring the officer's orders to stop fighting, OC spray was administered with no effect. As they continued to fight, one inmate picked up a trash can and threw it at the other inmate, who was making stabbing type motions at the inmate. OC spray was administered a second time, which was effective, causing the inmates to separate. Both inmates were removed from the dorm and brought to the infirmary for evaluation and decontamination.

No weapons were found after the fight.

The fifth inmate fight occurred on the same day in another dorm. Initially one inmate approached an officer in the dorm. The officer observed a significant cut on the side of the inmate's face. After treatment in the infirmary, he was transported to Gouverneur Hospital where he received eight sutures to close the wound. During the investigation, staff found another inmate in the dorm with injuries. During questioning, he admitted to cutting the inmate with a sharpened piece of metal. A search of the dorm was conducted and a second weapon was recovered from one of the dorm cubes. The weapon was an Exacto blade with a pen cap melted onto it as a handle.

Unrelated to the fights, a visitor was arrested at the facility attempting to smuggle 23 grams of marijuana into an inmate. The female, who was from Yonkers, turned over a black bundle wrapped in electrical tape that contained the drugs. A K9 at the facility initially alerted to the visitor. She was transported to the New York State Police Barracks and charged with Promoting Prison Contraband 2<sup>nd</sup>.

"In the past, medium security prisons did not have the level of violence of maximum security prisons because the population consisted of less violent inmates who were serving shorter sentences. That is no longer the case. In most medium security prisons, the inmate population consists of the same percentage of violent inmates as a maximum, with many serving life sentences. In the five inmate on inmate fights, there were two inmates serving life sentences for murder and one inmate who was a Blood Gang Member who is incarcerated for Sex Trafficking of a Minor. Thankfully in all incidents there was no staff injured. That is not always the case when inmates ignore orders and officers need to physically stop the fights and often are assaulted and injured in doing so. As we have repeatedly stated in the past year, the HALT Act has created a significant safety issue for officers, the same is true for inmates who are attacked by other inmates. With no disciplinary system left, there is little to deter this from happening every single day." – said Bryan Hluska, NYSCOPBA Central Region Vice President.