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

"Keeping New York Safe"

Drug Overdoses, Weapon Recoveries, Visitor Arrests and Staff Injuries Highlight Dangerous Conditions at Upstate Correctional Facility

For Immediate Release

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Malone, NY – Correction officers at Upstate Correctional Facility responded to a series of dangerous incidents between September 28 and October 25, including multiple inmate drug overdoses requiring repeated doses of Narcan, the recovery of numerous weapons, visitor arrests involving illegal drugs, inmate-on-inmate assaults, and injuries to correction officers.

During the one-month period, staff encountered 14 inmates under the influence of unknown substances, many of whom required multiple doses of Narcan before becoming responsive. The incidents highlight the continued threat posed by dangerous drugs circulating inside New York's correctional facilities and the risks correction officers face when responding to medical emergencies involving suspected overdoses.

In addition to the drug-related incidents, officers recovered 12 weapons during cell searches and inmate pat frisks. Among the weapons recovered were a metal shank concealed inside an inmate's boot and six ceramic blades hidden inside a single cell.

K9 efforts during inmate visits also resulted in the arrest of two female visitors on charges of Promoting Prison Contraband in the Second Degree. During separate incidents, a K9 alerted to the visitors, who then voluntarily surrendered bundles containing marijuana and drug-soaked paper. Both women were transported the New York State Police barracks in Malone for processing.

Violence between inmates also required staff intervention. In two separate inmate-on-inmate fights that occurred inside cells, two inmates sustained lacerations. One inmate was injured with a sharpened plastic shank. Both inmates required medical treatment at an outside hospital.

Correction officers were also injured while responding to incidents and conducting cell extractions and use-of-force interventions to gain control of combative inmates. Eight officers sustained injuries during the reporting period, including injuries to their hands, forearms, biceps, and legs. All eight officers were treated at the facility and remained on duty.

“These incidents are another troubling example of the dangerous and unpredictable environment correction officers are forced to work in every day. In just one month, our members dealt with 14 suspected drug overdoses, recovered a dozen weapons, interrupted drug-smuggling attempts involving visitors, and responded to violent inmate assaults. Eight officers were injured simply doing the job they are trained to do,” said NYSCOPBA Northern Region Vice President Dana Grammo.

“The repeated overdoses requiring multiple doses of Narcan, combined with the number of weapons being recovered, demonstrate the serious security challenges inside our prisons. Our members are on the front lines of these emergencies, often putting themselves in harm's way to protect the lives of others. New York's correction officers deserve the staffing, resources, and support necessary to safely manage these increasingly dangerous facilities.”

“The drug overdoses alone take away valuable resources to the residents of Franklin County every time an ambulance must be utilized to transport an inmate to a hospital for an overdose. Each time that occurs, it costs the taxpayers upwards to $1500 for each incident, stated Grammo.”