

Danyeale Madsen

From: Rita Dixit-Kubiak <sunrise1055@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 8:44 PM
To: NDOC BOPC
Cc: Jodi Hocking
Subject: Re: Food & Water at NDOC Prison Facilities

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Respectfully submitted for the Board of Prison Commissioners Meeting dated 08-30-2023

I am a member of Return Strong. But even before I got to know Return Strong, ever since I have had a loved one incarcerated at your facility, I have been concerned about the quality of food available. The ultra processed food choices present in the prison vending machines and sold by the only NDOC package food vendor, Access Securepak, is deeply problematic. “Ingredients used widely in the production of ultra-processed foods such as [saturated fats](#), [added sugar](#), and [sodium](#) have become markers of poor diet quality due to their effect on heart disease, obesity, and high blood pressure.” Harvard T.H. School of Public Health. It would be helpful if NDOC widens it’s vendor choice & follows the lead of neighboring State California’s DCR allowing families to source healthier food & nutritional food supplements for their loved ones.

In recent months RS has received disturbing feed-back from the presently and formerly incarcerated at NDOC regarding the drinking water and food. Their collective experiences corroborate. The faucet delivered drinking-water tastes close to putrid; what could be the possible reason, and why is this permissible? Why is there no provision for filtered water? It is normal for government offices and businesses I have visited to have drinking water fountains, why not prisons? As per food, NDOC prison food has steadily deteriorated in quality in the last years, and the portions served are inadequate for full grown women and men. Prisoners are victim to acute food borne diseases. Those prisoners whose families cannot afford the money for food packages and commissary, suffer chronic hunger. Depression, irritation/anger, brain fog, bingeing are some common mental disorders that stem from chronic hunger.

NDOCs written mandate is to provide inmates nutritious, well-balanced meals within menu guidelines, under sanitary conditions. Sadly, NDOC's daily food delivery does not meet its written goals. Clearly, those who drafted the NDOC food regulations do recognize that serving inmates a nutritious & adequate amount of food at each meal is important to the correctional process. How do we ensure that the food served in NDOC facilities does not become the basis for physical and mental public health crises in prison & upon reentry into society?

ACLU correctly notes in one of its articles, “It benefits us all to ensure that people return to their communities after incarceration in better physical and mental condition than when they went in. Meals that foster diabetes, hypertension, kidney disease, or other costly illnesses associated with poor nutrition result in expensive medical care for formerly incarcerated people, and a lost opportunity for them to return home in good health upon their release. Rebuilding a life after incarceration is difficult, and diminished health adds yet another barrier to reentry.” The correlation between difficult re-entries and recidivism is known. The current recidivism rate in Nevada is one in three formerly incarcerated individual re-enters the prison system. Food & Water quality and security in NDOC prisons is not just an NDOC issue it becomes a lifelong issue for those incarcerated and their families and society at

large. Food that tastes good and is good for you is the foundation of physical and emotional wellness, and a fundamental part of the human experience. That shouldn't change because someone is incarcerated.

Recently, with the generous support of philanthropists, a program called Chefs in Prison, in partnership with Dan Giusti, former chef de cuisine at the Michelin Star restaurant Noma, and his company [Brigaid](#) have started work with the Maine Department of Corrections as an initial site to transform food service across all of Maine's correctional facilities, under the leadership of MDOC Commissioner Randall Liberty. The effort includes providing quality culinary training to every incarcerated person assigned to work in a prison kitchen, with the added benefit of boosting their employment prospects after release. Surely such a program for nutritious food and chef's training at NDOC makes perfect sense with Las Vegas' capacity to absorb well-trained chefs!

We would want to solve the issues surrounding food together with NDOC. May we please, collectively drum up the will to create a truly visionary food and water security program for prisons here that will quell the angst in all stakeholders: the incarcerated, the prison staff, the management, and we the members of the family of the incarcerated. We would want to solve the issues surrounding food in a productive partnership with NDOC.

Sincerely,

Rita Dixit Kubiak