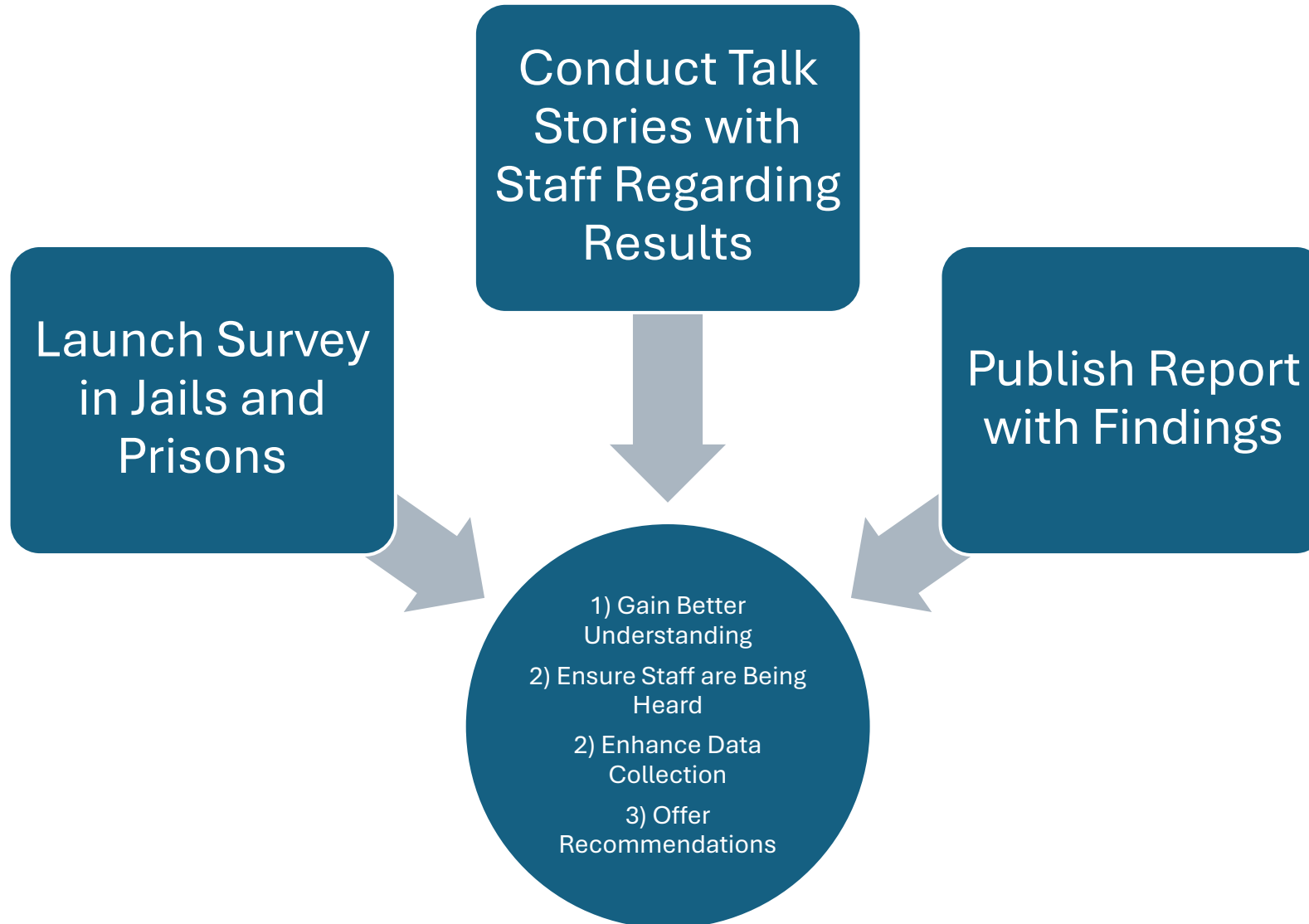# HAWAII CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM OVERSIGHT COMMISSION

Correctional Staff Survey, Findings, & Recommendations

A comprehensive overview of Hawaii correctional staff job satisfaction, workplace culture, staff health, facility conditions, and interactions with incarcerated individuals completed by the Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission.

Research Methods

Launch Survey in Jails and Prisons

Conduct Talk Stories with Staff Regarding Results

Publish Report with Findings

1) Gain Better Understanding

2) Ensure Staff are Being Heard

2) Enhance Data Collection

3) Offer Recommendations

Survey

Job Satisfaction Questions 1-9

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Downtown Questions 10-13

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Workplace Culture Questions 14-46

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Staff Health Questions 47-62

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Purpose of Incarceration Questions 63-72

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Facility Conditions Questions 73-81

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Staff – Incarcerated People Interactions Questions 82-95

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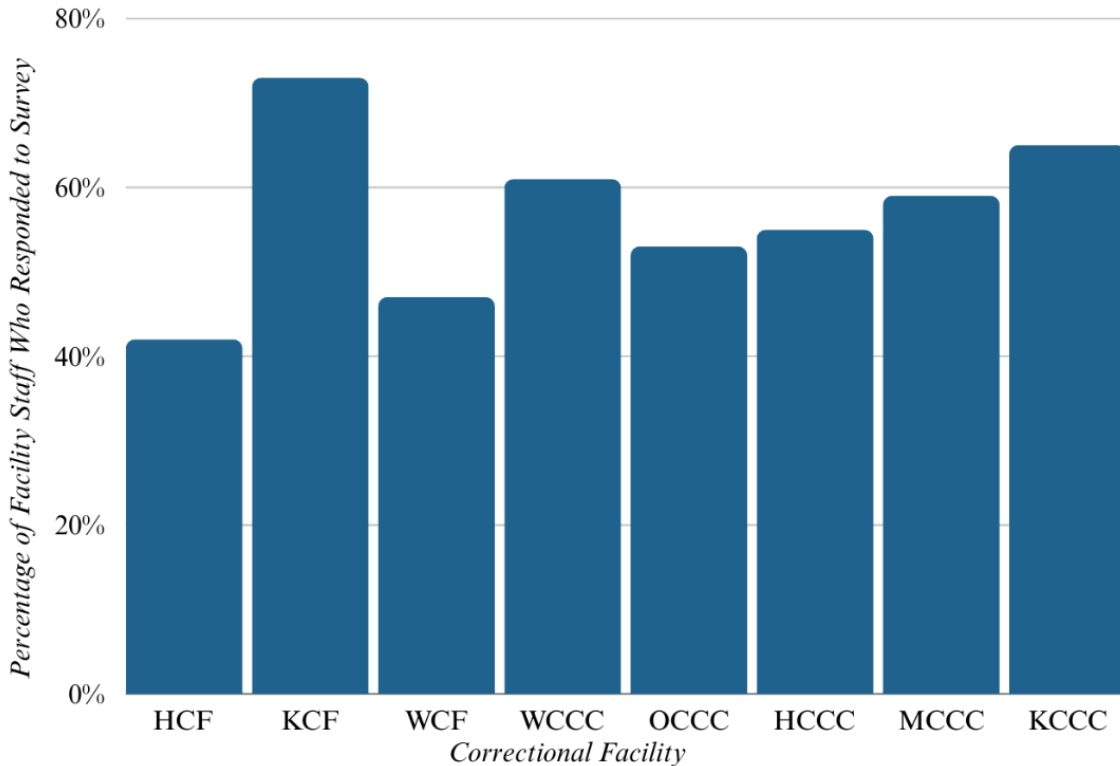**Correctional Practices and Sanctions** Questions 96-106

Survey Participation and Key Findings

Leadership and Communication:

- Staff expressed dissatisfaction with leadership's engagement and transparency. A lack of inclusion in decision-making and perceived disconnect between central leadership ("Downtown") and facility operations contributed to low morale and trust issues.

Workplace Conditions:

- Many staff cited unsustainable work conditions marked by mandatory overtime, insufficient staff, and inadequate wellness resources. The report noted that such conditions contribute to physical and mental health struggles, including high rates of PTSD, anxiety, and depression.

Health and Wellness:

- Approximately 60% of staff reported developing serious health conditions due to job stress, with notable impacts on family life and mental well-being. Over 60% of staff cited inadequate wellness support, and 75% felt emotionally drained.

Interactions with Incarcerated Individuals:

- Despite challenging conditions, most staff expressed a commitment to respectful and supportive interactions with those in custody. However, limited resources hindered efforts to foster rehabilitation and prepare individuals for reintegration.

Differentiation Between Jail and Prison Staff:

- Jail staff reported more severe work and health challenges than their prison counterparts, with higher incidences of turnover, mandatory overtime, and mental health issues.

Jail and Prison Distinction

Safety & Staffing

- **Jails** have more hazardous and critical conditions.
- **Jails** have severe staffing shortages, higher turnover rates, and more mandatory overtime.
- **Jails** have work schedules that create significant conflicts at home for many staff.
- **Prisons** have safety concerns and turnover is prevalent but less severe than in jails.
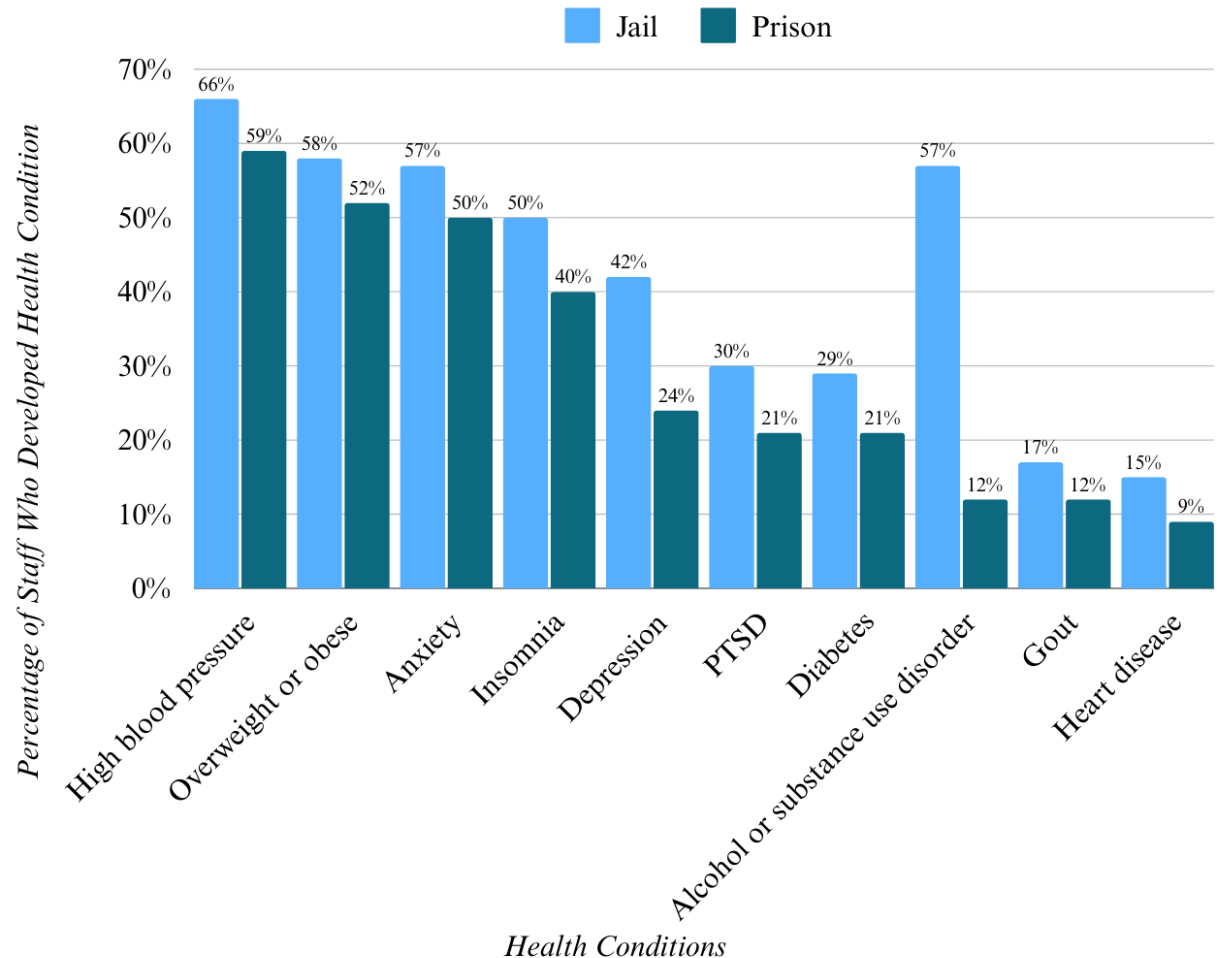
Staff Health Concerns

- **Jails** have alarmingly higher rates of depression, insomnia, PTSD, diabetes, and heart disease.
- **Jails** have serious thoughts of suicide reported twice as often as prison staff. have troubling

Facility Conditions

- **Jails** have poor food quality, lack of natural light, have inadequate cleanliness, and subpar living spaces for incarcerated individuals.
- **Jails** have insufficient correctional practices, such as alternatives to segregation or rewarding good behavior, exacerbating challenges.
- In **jails**, staff often describe their work as "doing time" themselves.
- In **prisons**, conditions also problematic but generally less severe than in jails.

Since starting work in corrections, I have developed the following health conditions:

Legend: Jail, Prison

Percentage of Staff Who Developed Health Condition

Health Condition	Jail	Prison
High blood pressure	66%	59%
Overweight or obese	58%	52%
Anxiety	57%	50%
Insomnia	50%	40%
Depression	42%	24%
PTSD	30%	21%
Diabetes	29%	21%
Alcohol or substance use disorder	57%	12%
Gout	17%	12%
Heart disease	15%	9%

Health Conditions

*Some individuals responded that they developed more than one of the above health conditions since starting work in corrections, thereby the above percentages exceed 100%.

Uniform and Civilian Staff Distinction

Job Satisfaction:

- Civilian staff report higher enthusiasm for work, feeling appreciated by leadership, and support for career goals.
- Uniform staff are more willing to change jobs if given the chance.

Communication & Inclusiveness:

- Both groups express concerns about communication and inclusiveness in the DCR.
- Uniform staff report greater dissatisfaction with Downtown's communication of a clear vision and respect for input.

Workplace Culture:

- Civilian staff report better leadership support, facility safety, and employee wellness resources.
- Uniform staff see more professional growth opportunities.

Perspectives on Rehabilitation:

- Civilian staff are more optimistic about rehabilitation and emphasize helping people make positive changes.

Facility Conditions:

- Uniform staff often describe their work as "doing time" themselves

Since starting work in corrections, I have developed the following health conditions:
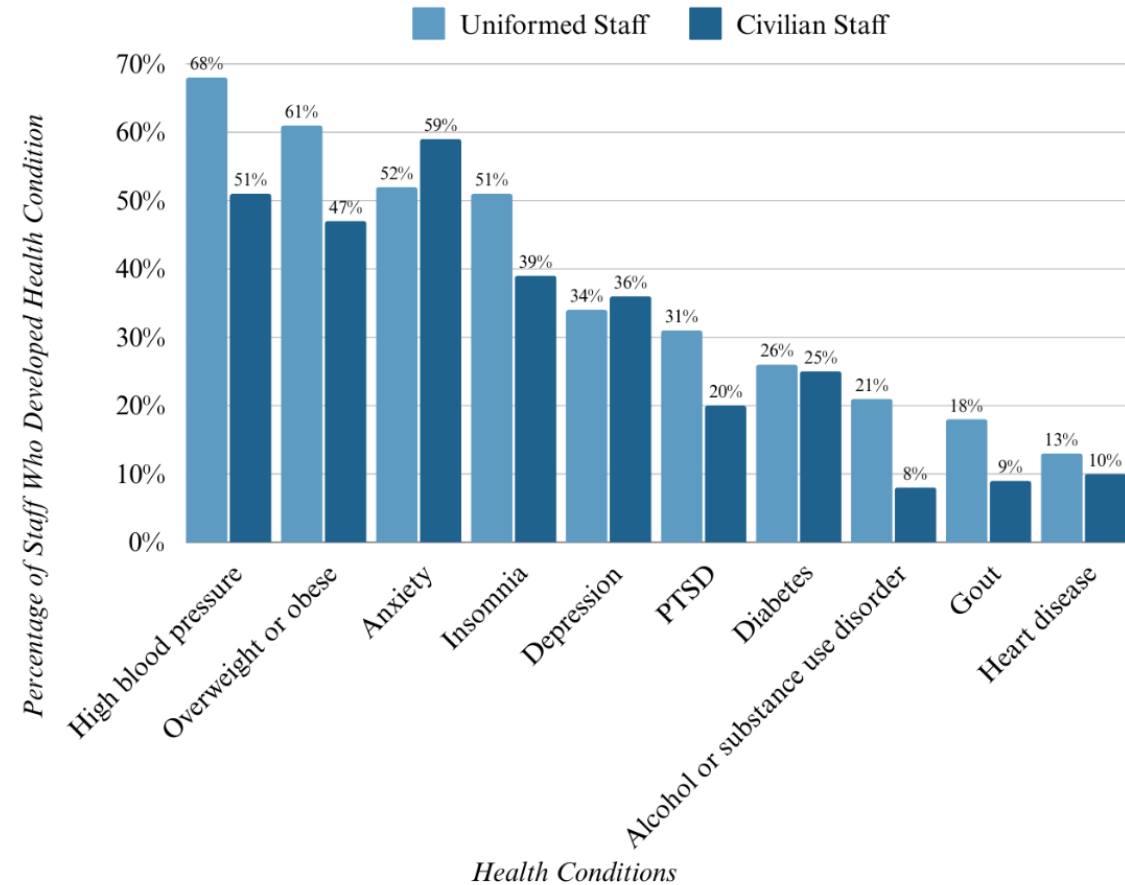
*Some individuals responded that they developed more than one of the above health conditions since starting work in corrections, thereby the above percentages exceed 100%.

Talk Story Sessions & Themes

HCCC
- Conditions of the facility
- Most empathy and concern for those in custody

KCCC
- Working multiple posts
- Mandatory overtime
- Worst moral in state

MCCC
- Training
- Supportive communication

OCCC
- Staff not coming to work
- Not being heard of feeling valued
- Burnout

HCF
- Staff not coming to work
  - Wanted the most accountability for this

KCF
- Facility leadership (since retired)
- Restrictive facility

WCCC
- Facility leadership
- Lack of preparation for incoming jail population

WCF
- No concerns, only recommendations to help other facilities.

Recommendations

Training

1. Comprehensive and Consistent Training for All Staff

2. Leadership, Communication, and Empathy Training

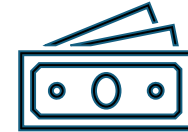3. Mental Health and Crisis Intervention

Communication

1. Include Staff in Decision-Making

2. Regular and Transparent Communication

3. Improve Internal Communication Within Facilities

Trust

1. Consistent and Fair Policies

2. Regular Leadership Engagement

3. Involvement in Decision-Making

Compensation and Benefits

1. Increase Base Pay and Bonuses

2. Improve and Expand Uniform Allowance to Support Professionalism

3. Ensure Accurate and Timely Payment

Recommendations cont.

Recruitment/ Retention

1. Shorten the Hiring Process
2. Revise the Psychological Evaluation
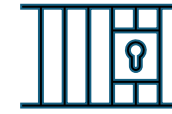3. Enhance Training and Support

Overtime

1. Limit Burnout
2. Fair Overtime Distribution
3. Incentives for Attendance
4. Implement 12-hour Shifts
5. Re-evaluate Staffing Plans and Posts
6. Enhance Policies for Time Off and Overtime Distribution
7. Hire More Staff and Streamline Hiring Process
8. Improve Scheduling Flexibility
9. Implement Voluntary Overtime Program

Staff Health and Wellness

1. Mental Health Support
2. Physical Wellness Resources
3. Work-Life Balance

Concerns Regarding Incarceration

1. Ensure Consistent Transfers and Access to Programs
2. Enhance Mental Health and Rehabilitative Services
3. Expand Rehabilitative and Therapeutic Programming

Conclusion

1. Enhanced Training and Support

2. Improved Communication and Inclusion

3. Increased Compensation and Benefits

4. Focused Staff Wellness Initiatives