



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
P.O. Box 41100 • Olympia, Washington 98504-1110

August 23, 2019

Joanna Carns
Office of Corrections Ombuds
PO Box 43113
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Ms. Carns:

The Washington Department of Corrections appreciates the opportunity to respond to the 'OCO Reports on Investigations into Property Loss' completed by the Office of Corrections Ombuds.

Larch Corrections Center Recommendation	Response
DOC should consider adding prosthetics, including dentures, on incarcerated persons' property matrices so that staff are aware of the need to search for and include such prosthetics in property pack outs.	Correctional facilities do incorporate prosthetics on an incarcerated individual's property matrices in the OMNI system, and the matrices allows for further description of the prosthetic, such as "dentures." The official agency form (05-062) does not currently have a line for prosthetics but the form will soon be revised to include a line for prosthetics within the Durable Medical Equipment section.
DOC should conduct a review to determine what gaps in communication resulted in the lack of replacement dentures issued to the incarcerated person after the tort claim investigation recommended replacement, including who ultimately was accountable to perform such action.	The tort claim response did recommend that the agency replace the lost dentures. The response was provided in December 2018. The incarcerated individual was scheduled for release in April 2019. The dental protocol for denture prosthetics requires a minimum of six months or more prior to release for fabrication and fitting. Because the total amount of time between the response recommendation and the patient's release from the system was four months, the patient did not receive his replacement dentures prior to release.
DOC should ensure better continuity of care post-release. Although DOC staff confirmed that the person had access to Medicaid post release, navigating community reentry was surely made more difficult in having to also obtain dentures that should have been replaced while he was still incarcerated.	The agency continues to work toward improved continuity of post-release care. According to Health Services, for the most recently completed fiscal year, the agency has pre-enrolled 5,181 individuals in the Medicaid program for post-release health care in the community. The Department continues to pursue electronic health records (EHR) through the legislative process.



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DOC should ensure a continuous improvement process exists so that when issues are identified, such as through a tort claim investigation, DOC line staff can submit them for evaluation and action.

The agency believes in and demonstrates continuous improvement processes in a number of operational areas. The department is open to a continuous improvement process involving the training and processes surrounding tort claim investigations.

The information provided by the OCO was useful to ensure the Department of Corrections is taking necessary steps to appropriately track an incarcerated person's property during their time in the agency's facilities. Further, the OCO provided solid recommendations to identify gaps in operational accountability that can and should be filled by the department.

Moving forward, the Washington Department of Corrections will continue to implement additional policies, procedures, and security measures to continue to align with the Office of Corrections Ombuds recommendations.

Sincerely,

Steve Sinclair, Secretary
Washington Department of Corrections