

Motion 16863

**Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention  
Report on the Status of Safety Improvements  
at Adult Detention Facilities**

---

June 2025



**King County**

## I. Table of Contents

II.	Proviso Text.....	4
III.	Executive Summary .....	5
IV.	Background.....	7
V.	Report Requirements .....	7
	Safety Technologies and Initiatives in Use:.....	7
	A. Contraband Detectors, Including Metal Detectors and X-ray Machines .....	8
	B. Body Scanners .....	10
	C. Cameras .....	11
	D. Radios.....	11
	E. Duress Alarms .....	12
	F. Drug Detection Dog.....	12
	G. Other / Non-technology Safety Initiatives .....	12
	i. Resident and Legal Mail Changes.....	13
	ii. Pass-Through Locks.....	14
	iii. Suicide Prevention Efforts.....	16
	• Patient identifying information (including demographic information) .....	16
	• Location of the incident (facility, floor, unit/cell, and identifying if it is a restrictive housing location and/or other type of housing such as medical or psychiatric) .....	16
	• Method/type of behavior (e.g., head banging, cutting, jumping) .....	16
	• Timeline leading up to incident and response (including any assessment and follow-up by JHS staff with the patient).....	16
	• Process for identifying the range of possible factors that contributed to the incident including a review of the following categories of factors:.....	16
	iv. Naloxone .....	19
	v. Drug Interdiction Workgroup .....	21
	vi. Drug Identification Technology.....	21
	vii. Partnership with Superior Court Adult Drug Diversion Court .....	22
	Improvement, Expansion and Implementation of Safety Technology: .....	23
	A. Body Scanners .....	23
	B. Fixed / Facility Cameras .....	23
	C. Radios .....	24
	D. Duress Alarms.....	24
	E. Body-Worn Cameras .....	24

VI. Conclusion / Next Actions .....	25
Figure 1 Dangerous drug contraband intercepted by DAJD using X-ray technology .....	7
Figure 2 Metrasens scanner at KCCF .....	8
Figure 3 Tek84 Body scanner in DAJD facility .....	9
Figure 4 DAJD's legal mail cart .....	13
Figure 5 Locked attorney pass-through .....	14
Figure 6 Instructions for locking pass-through .....	14
Figure 7 Retrofitted bunk at KCCF, showing infill between the bunk surface and wall .....	16
Figure 8 Retrofitted upper tiers at KCCF .....	17
Figure 9 Instructions on intervening in a suspected overdose .....	19
Figure 10 NARCAN deployments at DAJD adult facilities .....	20
Figure 11 Naloxone vending machine in public area of MRJC.....	20
Figure 12 One of DAJD's TruNarc handheld drug detection devices .....	21
Figure 13 Adult Drug Diversion Court poster inside a DAJD facility .....	22

## II. Proviso Text

Ordinance 19861, Section 54, Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention, P5<sup>1</sup>

Of this appropriation, \$100,000 shall not be expended or encumbered until the executive transmits a report on the status of safety improvements at adult detention facilities, and a motion that should acknowledge receipt of the report, and a motion acknowledging receipt of the report is passed by the council. The motion should reference the subject matter, the proviso's ordinance, ordinance section, and proviso number in both the title and body of the motion.

The report shall include, but not be limited to:

A. A description of technology used in the adult detention facilities to support physical safety for officers, residents, and visitors, including, but not limited to, facility cameras, duress alarms, and radios;

B. An assessment of the condition and effectiveness of the technologies and plans to address any problems such as: gaps in camera and radio coverage; whether there are enough duress alarms and radios for all staff who need them; and whether cameras, duress alarms, and radios are functioning;

C. A discussion of options for addressing gaps or needs identified in section B. of this proviso, including the status, scope, schedule, budget, and potential funding sources for any identified projects to address the gaps;

D. Discussion of the status, scope, schedule, budget, potential funding sources, and timeline for implementing body worn cameras; and

E. A discussion of the timeline and next steps for addressing full implementation of technology to maximize adult detention facility safety.

The executive should electronically file the report and a motion required by this proviso by June 30, 2025, with the clerk of the council, who shall retain an electronic copy and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff, and the lead staff for the law and justice committee or its successor.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ordinance 19861, Section 54, p30-31 [\[LINK\]](#)

### III. Executive Summary

The highest priority of the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention (DAJD) is ensuring the safety and security of the staff and residents within the Department's care. This Proviso response provides a comprehensive description of the major security technologies in use by the Department, as well as the non-technology efforts the Department engages to support and enhance the technology as required by Ordinance 19861. To protect the safety and security of staff, residents and facilities, specific details regarding the number of security devices, and their location, coverage, vulnerabilities, and other related factors are not included in this report.

DAJD's safety initiatives primarily fall into two categories: prevention and response. Prevention includes identifying and controlling items entering the jail facilities and attempting to eliminate all dangerous substances or items that could be fashioned into weapons by residents to harm themselves or others. Examples of prevention initiatives include:

- Contraband detectors, including metal detectors, x-ray machines, and body scanners
- Drug detection dogs
- Screening of resident and legal mail
- Locks on pass-through doors between visitors and residents
- Handheld drug detection and identification devices

Prevention also involves reducing the potential for suicide attempts. In the last few years, the Department has pursued several new initiatives aimed at reducing the risk of suicide attempts in its facilities, such as:

- Bunk Retrofit – From 2021 through 2023, DAJD and the Facilities Management Division (FMD) completed a major facility project to fill in structural gaps in bunks at the King County Correctional Facility (KCCF) that provided a potential tie-off point for self-strangulation.
- West Wing Bunk Changes – This year, DAJD and FMD are replacing older, free-standing bunks in the West Wing, which had sharp edges that could be used as tie-off points. Instead, newer models with rounded edges are being anchored to the wall, reducing this concern.
- Jump Barriers – Concurrent with the bunk retrofit project at KCCF, DAJD installed barriers on the upper tiers of housing units which impede the ability to jump from the second level to the concrete floor below.
- Increased monitoring – DAJD and Jail Health Services (JHS) have developed new processes for increased communication, including weekly meetings, to attempt to identify and appropriately care for high-risk individuals.
- Additional measures – DAJD has removed areas of exposed cords and conduit, shortened phone cords in visitation areas, replaced shower curtains with tear-away curtains, replaced tearable sheets with additional tear-resistant blankets, and reduced the quantity of over-the-counter medications that could be ordered directly by the resident through their commissary accounts.

The second category, response, focuses on ensuring risks are addressed immediately, that assistance can be summoned quickly when needed, and that treatments like naloxone are readily accessible. This category also includes technology and other tools and methods that DAJD uses to communicate

amongst its staff, and with the partner agencies who work within the secure facilities. These tools include:

- Facility cameras
- Radios
- Duress alarms for staff to signal an emergency
- Accessibility of Naloxone to respond to overdoses

This report includes discussion of possible areas where DAJD could improve and/or expand response technology, particular in the areas of:

- Radios – The radio system signals at the King County Courthouse (KCCCH) and KCCF has been experiencing some deficiencies. Progress is being made to improve the three legacy systems involved. This work is currently being funded.
- Duress Alarms – This technology has progressed, and a significant system upgrade or replacement is needed to ensure system continuity and officer safety. Initial estimates indicate that replacement of the system at the Maleng Regional Justice Center (MRJC) could cost as much as \$1.3 million, with expansion to KCCF and the Clark Children and Family Justice Center (CCFJC) adding \$2.4 million and \$700,000, respectively. These costs are not inclusive of facility infrastructure work that may be required. There is no current funding for this proposed work.
- Body-Worn Cameras (BWC) - DAJD had begun research to inform a federal grant application, but grant opportunities are not likely to be renewed in 2025. While the Department finds facility video recordings beneficial, it does not capture all areas or the detail that may be required to review an incident that unfolded quickly. BWC implementation would require funding for upfront installation, and ongoing support which would include the need for additional staff to manage the added records and investigative workload. There is no current funding for this proposed work.
- Body Scanners – The body scanning technology in use at DAJD uses small amounts of ionizing radiation, and their use is regulated by the Washington State Department of Health (DOH). DOH recently added new restrictions on the use of ionizing radiation and prohibited its use on anyone under the age of 18. DAJD believes the new DOH rule stems from its understanding of the Washington State Department of Corrections' use of the machines, which is different and more frequent than DAJD's use. DAJD is currently pursuing a variance that would allow for more utilization of the existing machines. In addition, DAJD is working with the Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget (PSB) and the Office of Risk Management (ORM) to pursue funding to purchase new millimeter wave machines that would not be restricted by DOH rules.
- Fixed / Facility Cameras – DAJD is engaged in a funded capital project to replace analog cameras in KCCF and MRJC, with projected completion by the end of 2026. This project will also upgrade associated technology that provides access to monitoring and recordings.

Finally, although this report has necessary limitations due to security concerns, DAJD is available to provide individual briefings with councilmembers where sensitive information can be more readily discussed.

## IV. Background

**Department Overview:** The Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention (DAJD) operates three secure detention facilities and a number of community supervision programs for pre- and post-trial defendants throughout King County. The two adult secure detention divisions are the Seattle Division and the Kent Division. The Seattle Division operates the King County Correctional Facility (KCCF), and the Kent Division operates the secure detention portion of the Maleng Regional Justice Center (MRJC). In 2024, the combined average daily population of both adult detention facilities was 1,407.

The mission of DAJD is to provide in-custody and community-based services that are data-informed, advance safety, lead system change, and promote equitable outcomes for the people served. The Department's priorities include ensuring the safety and security of staff and residents, managing operational risks, strengthening community connections, promoting opportunities to humanize the people in the facilities and programs, and recruiting, developing, supporting, and retaining staff.

**Context:** DAJD uses an interconnected web of technologies, partnerships, and people to ensure and enhance the safety and security of staff, residents and the physical detention buildings that are managed by the Department. Safety efforts include things such as: controlling the people and materials brought into the buildings, ensuring visual contact with areas both inside and outside of the buildings, making sure that officers and staff have adequate communications with each other and can call for backup, preventing risk of self-harm and suicide, and guaranteeing that education and prevention efforts are available for residents. Technology and tools used to support these various efforts are constantly evolving and improving, and DAJD is always working to keep up with changes and improvements to provide the safest possible working and living environment for those in the Department's care.

**Report Methodology:** The descriptions of the various technologies and efforts DAJD is engaged in that support this report were compiled by the Department using research and interviews with subject matter experts in the Seattle, Kent, and Juvenile Divisions, as well as Department senior managers, and partners at the Department of Public Health Jail Health Services (JHS) and King County Information Technology (KCIT). In some cases, vendor-supplied literature also supplemented knowledge and understanding of use.

## V. Report Requirements

**Introduction:** The top priority of DAJD is to ensure the safety and security of staff and residents within its facilities. Without that, none of the other priorities or mission of the Department can be met or fulfilled. The following report discusses the major technological and operational tools that the Department uses to maintain safety and security in its adult facilities. To protect the safety of staff, residents and facilities, specific details regarding the number of security devices, and their coverage, vulnerabilities, and other concerns are not provided in this report.

**Safety Technologies and Initiatives in Use:** The following section provides a broad overview of technology-based safety measures that are in use in DAJD's adult facilities. The discussion includes descriptions of the equipment used, general functions within DAJD facilities, and metrics for success when applicable. All the equipment and technology mentioned in this report are components of a

system of interventions that together help provide safer and more secure facilities. DAJD strives for continuous improvement by monitoring national best practices, participating in industry educational conferences to learn about new and emerging equipment and practices, testing promising technology, and scaling up successful interventions.

#### A. Contraband Detectors, Including Metal Detectors and X-ray Machines

DAJD uses a combination of metal detectors and X-ray machines for contraband detection at public entrances to its detention facilities and around the facilities. Visitors to these facilities place property in X-ray machines, which can detect organic materials such as drugs (see Figure 1), and walk past metal detectors that readily detect metal that could be fashioned into weapons. The combination of X-ray machines and metal detectors are used by DAJD officers for screening public visitors at the front door of all three detention facilities.

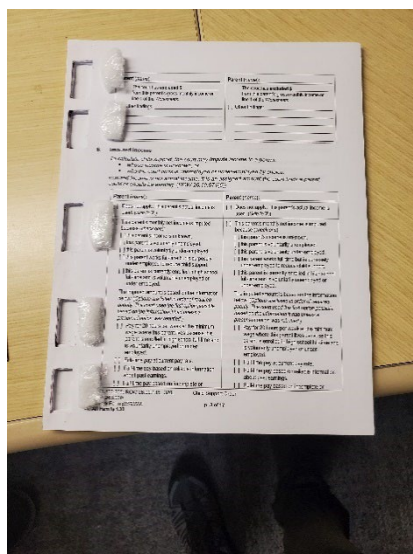


Figure 1: Dangerous drug contraband intercepted by DAJD using X-ray technology

Officers also use hand-held metal detectors, or wands, to augment detection, similar to those used at the County's courthouses. The wands can be waved over specific body locations to rule out metal alerts from things like watches, belts, and shoes, and to more closely pinpoint problematic items like knives or vape pens. Handheld metal detectors are effective at identifying metal on a person, or in a mattress or other locations that are not easily put through a standing metal detector. Because they are portable, and not prohibitively expensive, DAJD is able to use them in all areas of the secure facilities, including during housing unit searches.

Metal detector technology has evolved and improved over time. Newer versions of metal detectors are more sensitive and can indicate more precisely where items are located on a body or object. In late 2022, DAJD began using newer metal-sensing technology called Metrasens detectors (see Figure 2).



Metrasens is the brand name of a line of ferromagnetic detectors.<sup>2</sup> Ferromagnetic detection systems (FMDS) use magnetic sensors to monitor the ambient magnetic field around metal objects and detect distortions caused by the presence of ferromagnetic objects. When a ferromagnetic object is brought near the FMDS, the distortion in the magnetic field is detected, triggering an alarm or providing a visual warning to officers.

Metrasens detectors can detect a very small amount of magnetic material, even as small as a paperclip, that may be in or on a person's body. One of the initial applications of this technology was to detect metal before a patient or provider entered an MRI location, however, the applications to correctional facilities are also clear. DAJD uses this technology to detect small pieces of metal that could be missed by a more traditional metal detector and to pinpoint where the metal is on the body. For DAJD, this technology can help officers determine the difference between a weapon or contraband, and things like metal pins within a body from a prior surgery. These detectors are in use around the secure facilities, specifically in areas where contraband is likely to be introduced to the facilities such as at booking, at return from court, and other sensitive locations.

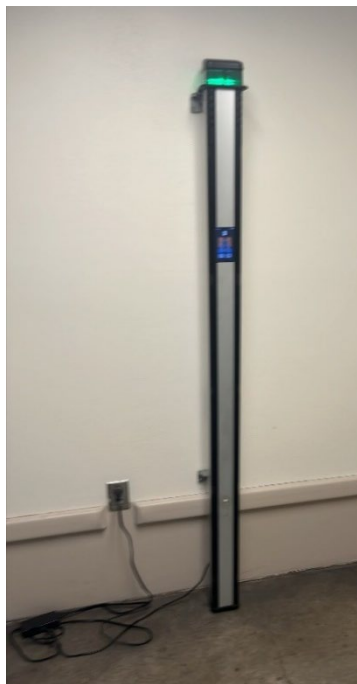


Figure 2: Metrasens scanner at KCCF

The Metrasens detectors are smaller than traditional metal detectors and are portable. This allows DAJD to use them almost anywhere in the facility and to re-deploy them easily to use in a housing unit search, or other situation where close detection of metal contraband is helpful.

---

<sup>2</sup> A ferromagnetic object is a material, like iron, nickel, or cobalt that exhibits a strong attraction to magnets.

## B. Body Scanners

As part of the opening of the Clark Children and Family Justice Center (CCFJC) in 2020, the juvenile detention facility installed a body scanner for use in the detection of contraband and weapons (see Figure 3). This technology was used as an alternative to conducting a strip search of youth. Following a year of demonstrated success locating contraband with the body scanner at the CCFJC, the County procured and installed similar body scanners at the KCCF and the MRJC.



Figure 3: Tek84 Body scanner in DAJD facility

The scans generated by this equipment create an image of the structure(s) of the body, so that a trained operator can detect contraband on or inside a body. The scan allows DAJD to detect small objects, including plastic items that are not otherwise detected by the metal detectors discussed earlier. Body scanners also allow the Department to detect drugs and even small amounts of pills within the body that could lead to overdoses or other medical emergencies. The body scanners accomplish this level of detection without physical contact. Since their implementation, DAJD has used these machines to identify contraband materials or potential weapons that are small or plastic, and other contraband items including drugs, which officers were able to confiscate before the items could cause physical harm.

Additional discussion about scanners can be found under “Improvement, Expansion, and Implementation of Safety Technology” Section A.

### C. Cameras

DAJD also uses video cameras for security within its detention facilities. Fixed cameras are used both inside and outside of the secure facilities. Some cameras record and some do not. As use has expanded over time at the KCCF and MRJC facilities, the technology has advanced and changed, and the number and placements of cameras have increased.

Cameras are used to expand the scope of officers' observations throughout their shifts. Cameras provide visual access to places that are hard for officers to see, like the roofs of the buildings. External cameras allow officers to determine which law enforcement agencies may be approaching the facilities or whether unauthorized vehicles are attempting to gain access, for example. External cameras also enable security officers to see a staff person's face before granting them access to facility doors or allowing staff and appropriate visitors to board facility elevators. In the event of an emergency, facility cameras, both external and internal, can allow control officers to more quickly see where emergency response personnel, such as Seattle Fire or Medic One, are in the building, and quickly open doors and direct those resources through the building to where they are needed.

Cameras that record within the facilities allow DAJD to review emergency responses after the fact for investigative or training purposes, such as in the case of a medical emergency, fight, or other serious incident. For example, in the case of an overdose, cameras can be viewed by approved staff to determine where a search for additional substances might be most fruitful. Also, cameras may alert staff to other residents who might be in possession of drugs and at risk of overdose themselves.

In addition to the fixed cameras in the facilities, DAJD also uses the cameras in County-issued cell phones for recording of critical incidents, specifically anticipated uses of force, pursuant to Department policy. Since 2022, when a use of force incident is anticipated, the Sergeant on the scene will attempt to either record the incident or assign someone else to do so. This documentation via video allows DAJD to review incidents for the purposes of monitoring compliance with policy and procedure and for training.

Additional discussion about facility cameras can be found under "Improvement, Expansion, and Implementation of Safety Technology" Section B, with discussion about the potential to implement body-worn cameras in Section E.

### D. Radios

Radios assigned to officers are a critical life safety tool as the radios are the primary way that officers communicate with one another and summon help. County desk phones are Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phones, meaning they require a computer connection. Under DAJD policy, personal cell phones are not allowed inside the secure perimeter of DAJD's facilities for security reasons, and it is not feasible or cost effective to deploy County-issued cell phones to all staff. For these and other reasons, radios are the single most important method of communication for DAJD officers inside the secure facilities.

In late 2023, King County became part of the Puget Sound Emergency Radio Network (PSERN), which is a regional network formed to standardize operations, repair cycles, and maintain emergency radio equipment in the Puget Sound area. One of the lessons learned after 9/11 was that in a large-scale emergency, it was critical that regional agencies, such as the City of Seattle and King County, be able to communicate with one another on shared, or like networks. PSERN is the regional solution to this challenge.

The PSERN network uses digital technology to broadcast within its regional service area.<sup>3</sup> In DAJD’s case, the network brings the signal to the CCFJC, KCCF, MRJC, and the King County Courthouse (KCCH). Once the radio signal reaches the building, the system relies on a distributed antennae system (DAS) to move the digital signal throughout the buildings.

Additional discussion about the status of radio communication improvements can be found under “Improvement, Expansion, and Implementation of Safety Technology” Section C.

#### E. Duress Alarms

The MRJC was built as a direct supervision podular (new generation<sup>4</sup>) detention facility, with officers in direct contact with residents in an open dayroom for most of the day. Due to that layout, when the MRJC opened in 1997, officers assigned there were provided with personally worn duress alarms. The alarms are about the size of a pager, worn on the officer’s uniform, and are coupled with sensors distributed throughout the facility that can monitor an officer’s movement throughout the building. In addition, the duress alarms have a function that can indicate if the wearer is horizontal, indicating a problem, and automatically summon help. The duress alarms also have a button that can be pressed to alert other officers and staff of the need for immediate assistance.

At KCCF, DAJD has also retrofitted the multi-purpose rooms with emergency response buttons like those on duress alarms, referred to as EMERCOM buttons. The multi-purpose rooms at KCCF are used for programming and other appointments that occur between residents and non-DAJD resource personnel who do not carry radios. The installation of the EMERCOM buttons provide additional assurance for visitors that help, if needed, can be summoned quickly to shared areas of the facility.

Additional discussion about duress alarms can be found under “Improvement, Expansion, and Implementation of Safety Technology” Section D.

#### F. Drug Detection Dog

DAJD has recently started planning for a K-9 program, including acquisition of a drug detection dog for use in its secure facilities. Over the past few years, DAJD has had infrequent visits from drug detection dogs that belong to the Washington State Patrol and other partner law enforcement agencies. While the Department is very grateful for that sharing of resources, having a K-9 dedicated to DAJD will provide much more consistent drug detection coverage.

DAJD selected an Officer/Handler on March 3, 2025, and his K-9 partner will be selected by the time this report is transmitted to the Council. The team will attend the State Criminal Justice Training Academy in April of 2025. DAJD is working through the final pieces of policy development and post orders to support the inclusion of the K-9 into everyday operations. Training should be complete, and the officer and K-9 pair onsite in the secure facilities, in June of 2025.

#### G. Other / Non-technology Safety Initiatives

In addition to technological tools that DAJD uses to help maintain safety, the Department has undertaken several policy, physical plant, and coordination efforts that have yielded positive results.

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://psern.org/service-area/>

<sup>4</sup> National Institute of Justice. (1983). *New Generation Jails* (NCJ Publication No. 103205). U.S. Department of Justice. <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/Digitization/103205NCJRS.pdf>

#### *i. Resident and Legal Mail Changes*

One of the primary ways that drugs are introduced to the County's detention facilities is through mail to residents, both legal mail<sup>5</sup> and regular mail. DAJD has found that the number of emergency calls for potential overdoses is typically higher in the hours directly following mail delivery, and is likely attributable to drug-soaked paper that is easy for individuals to create or purchase on the dark web. This paper can then be used for writing and sending letters through the mail to residents in custody. In addition to mailing drug-soaked paper, other controlled substances, such as suboxone, can be pasted into the glued seams of envelopes or between pages within a stack of paper.

In response to an increase in observations of drug-laced mail, and a corresponding increase in overdoses, DAJD has made a series of significant changes to the way resident mail is handled and distributed. In August of 2023, DAJD began opening and copying all regular (non-legal) letters and envelopes, and then providing copies of the correspondence to the residents instead of the original documents which are then shredded. Residents were alerted to this change in practice through written correspondence, attached to their regular mail.

Immediately following the changes to the resident mail, DAJD experienced a significant increase in the volume of legal mail, as well as concerning signs of fraudulent use of the legal mail. By reaching out to law firms to confirm if they had been corresponding with residents, mailroom staff were able to confirm that in many cases, return envelopes had been stolen or fraudulently copied, raising concerns about the inclusion of drugs in mail that appeared to be legal mail. Legal mail is handled differently than regular mail; it is required to be opened in the presence of the resident. Because of this, the copying and shredding solution that DAJD developed for regular resident mail was not possible with legal mail.

DAJD worked with the Prosecuting Attorney's Office (PAO) and the Department of Public Defense (DPD) to change the legal mail process to intercept substances that had shifted from regular mail to legal mail. In June 2024, DAJD implemented a new process of distributing legal mail at KCCF. The change to the legal mail process was communicated to residents verbally, when legal mail was delivered. DAJD purchased rolling carts equipped with a mobile battery pack, a color copier, and a stand-alone shredder (see Figure 4). The legal mail is now taken to housing units and opened in front of the resident. The envelope and the contents are then copied. The copy is given to the resident and the original envelope and original contents are shredded, all within sight of the resident. The copier does not retain copies of the document in its memory. This process was also implemented at the MRJC in January 2025.

---

<sup>5</sup> Legal mail is the term used for any mail between a resident and their attorney, or their attorney's defense team. Legal mail is subject to special handling and attorney / client privilege.



Figure 4: DAJD's legal mail cart

These new processes of copying items received through the mail ensures zero contraband introduction through the mail, while also reducing the risk to staff of handling contaminants that are secreted within the incoming mail. In Spring 2025, DAJD is making another major change to mail delivery, by having personal mail delivered to resident tablets. This will significantly reduce the amount of personal paper mail received that requires copying and manual processing.

#### *ii. Pass-Through Locks*

Another way that drugs can be introduced into DAJD facilities is through the pass-throughs of visitation booths. Pass-throughs are small slots in visitation booths where attorneys can pass legal documents back and forth to clients for review and signature. The visitation booths are used by many visitors other than attorneys, but the pass-throughs are reserved for attorney use. Other personal or professional visitors are not permitted to exchange paper or other materials with residents. However, while not permitted, DAJD was intercepting drugs entering the facilities through the pass-throughs.





Figure 5: Locked attorney pass-through

As a response, in early 2024, DAJD worked with the Department of Executive Services, Facilities Management Division (FMD) to install locks on the pass-through doors (see Figure 5). Attorneys can check out keys to the locks from DAJD staff when they check in for their visits so that attorneys can continue to review legal documents with their clients, but the doors can now be locked after the visit, preventing others using the booths from introducing drugs and other contraband to the facilities. DAJD has placed instructions in the visiting booths as a reminder to attorneys to lock up at the completion of their visit (see Figure 6).

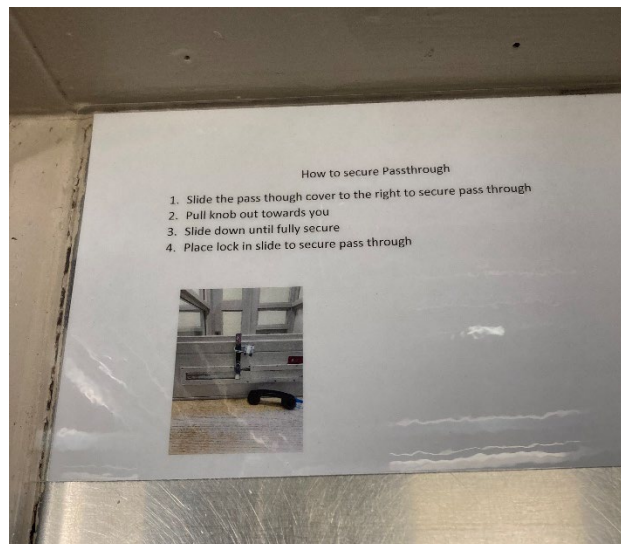


Figure 6: Instructions for locking pass-through

### *iii. Suicide Prevention Efforts*

In the last few years, the Department has pursued several new initiatives aimed at reducing the risk of suicide attempts in its facilities. These efforts fall into two areas of emphasis: one is physical plant changes in the adult facilities and the other is person-based efforts at coordination and intervention.

#### *DAJD / JHS Check-ins and Monitoring*

DAJD partners closely with JHS to monitor the resident population for suicide ideation and other mental health crises and to intervene to minimize self-harm. Coming to a detention facility can be a life-changing and very destabilizing event in a person's life. The first hours spent at a detention facility are often the most concerning.<sup>6</sup> JHS staff meet residents at the booking counters of the adult facilities where they gather information from the resident and arresting officer(s), and assess residents for substance abuse, withdrawal symptoms, and risk of self-harm. If the nurse making the assessment is concerned about a resident's mental state, the resident is assigned "red housing status" where JHS staff check on the resident five times per hour. If the resident engages in self-harm behavior, they may be restrained until they can emotionally regulate. If the resident is dysregulated to the extent that DAJD and JHS feel that they cannot keep the person safe within the detention facility, the resident is taken to Harborview Medical Center (HMC) where they can be given a higher level of care.

JHS and DAJD conduct a daily review of all residents assigned to "red housing status." The review includes psychiatric staff, nursing staff, classification staff, and other DAJD security staff. Corrections Officers are the eyes and ears of the facility in all situations, but especially in helping to determine whether a resident is emotionally regulated, and safe to be moved to general population housing. Their inclusion in discussions involving the health and mental health care providers for the residents in DAJD's care is a critical part of ensuring resident safety.

DAJD and JHS take the task of safely treating and housing people in King County's collective care very seriously. In November of 2022, DAJD and JHS began a standing, weekly meeting to discuss any residents who have been engaging in self-harm over the prior week. This meeting includes the Department Director and Deputy Director, the KCCF and MRJC Facility Commanders, and JHS Nursing Supervisors, Health Services Coordinator, and Psychiatric Services Supervisors. The standing agenda for this meeting is a review of self-harm behavior, suicide attempts, and any completed suicides from the prior week. In particular, the following are discussed:

- Patient identifying information (including demographic information)
- Location of the incident (facility, floor, unit/cell, and identifying if it is a restrictive housing location and/or other type of housing such as medical or psychiatric)
- Method/type of behavior (e.g., head banging, cutting, jumping)
- Timeline leading up to incident and response (including any assessment and follow-up by JHS staff with the patient)
- Process for identifying the range of possible factors that contributed to the incident including a review of the following categories of factors:
  - Human: individual limitations and capabilities, such as fatigue or distraction, and level of staffing

---

<sup>6</sup> Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2021). *Suicide in Local Jails and State and Federal Prisons, 2009-2019 – Statistical Tables*. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs.

<https://bjs.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh236/files/media/document/sljsfp0019st.pdf>



- Patient assessment: timeliness, accuracy, documentation, and communication
- Equipment: availability, function, and condition
- Environment: lighting, accessibility, safety of cell, and observation/surveillance capacity
- Information: accessibility, accuracy, and completeness
- Communication: technology, documentation, timing, and method (e.g., verbal)
- Training/competency: education, scope of practice, competency assessment, qualifications, effectiveness, and frequency of training
- Procedural compliance (including intervention): compliance, availability of procedures and policies, and barriers
- Treatment planning: individualization, effectiveness, and follow-up
- Organizational culture: response to risk and safety issues, communication of safety priorities, and prevention of adverse outcomes

Also at these meetings, patterns of behavior and root causes are discussed. Because this meeting includes the highest levels of leadership, this group can take immediate action to mitigate harm and correct defects in the facilities or systems of support. An action plan is also suggested in response to the review.

#### *Bunk Retrofit*

Starting in 2021, DAJD and FMD began a major facility project to retrofit bunks at the KCCF. DAJD and JHS staff had identified a structural issue with the upper bunks that left a gap between the bunk and the wall, which could be used as a ligature tie-off point for self-strangulation. Out of an abundance of caution, DAJD determined that all bunks, upper and lower, should be retrofitted. The bunk infill project retrofitted 908 bunks at KCCF by encasing the point of attachment to the wall with smooth-cornered stainless steel, eliminating tie-off points (see Figure 7). This effort required heavy security coordination and the rolling movement of residents out of housing units so that construction could occur. The effort was successfully completed in July of 2023.



Figure 7: Retrofitted bunk at KCCF, showing infill between the bunk surface and wall

### *West Wing Bunk Changes*

The COVID-19 pandemic required massive changes in DAJD's operations to keep residents and staff safe. One of the changes that DAJD made to operations early on was to re-occupy the West Wing of KCCF. The West Wing had not been occupied in many years and provided extra housing space within the secure perimeter that allowed the spreading out of residents to limit exposure and spread of COVID-19. With the re-occupation of portions of the West Wing, the older design of the bunks that are used in that space were daylighted. The West Wing is open dormitory style housing, and bunks that are used are older, free-standing, military style beds, and not anchored to the walls of the facility like the bunks in the main tower of KCCF. The bunks have squared off corners, which can provide a ligature tie-off point. DAJD is in the process of replacing these bunks with newer model beds that have curved or rounded edges, reducing the ability to tie-off. FMD will begin work to install in April 2025 and estimate eight weeks to complete the work.

### *Jump Barriers*

The KCCF facility has upper and lower tiers in most of the housing units. The upper tiers have railings to prevent falls, but suicidal individuals would be able to climb over the rails and jump from the upper tiers onto the hard concrete floor below, posing a risk of serious injury or death. Concurrent with DAJD's efforts to retrofit the individual bunks at KCCF, the Department also began a project to install jump barriers on the upper tiers of the housing units where needed. The barriers are clear polycarbonate resin (Lexan), a high-performance thermoplastic known for its strength, impact resistance, and transparency. The barriers leave sight lines uninterrupted and are very difficult to climb (see Figure 8).

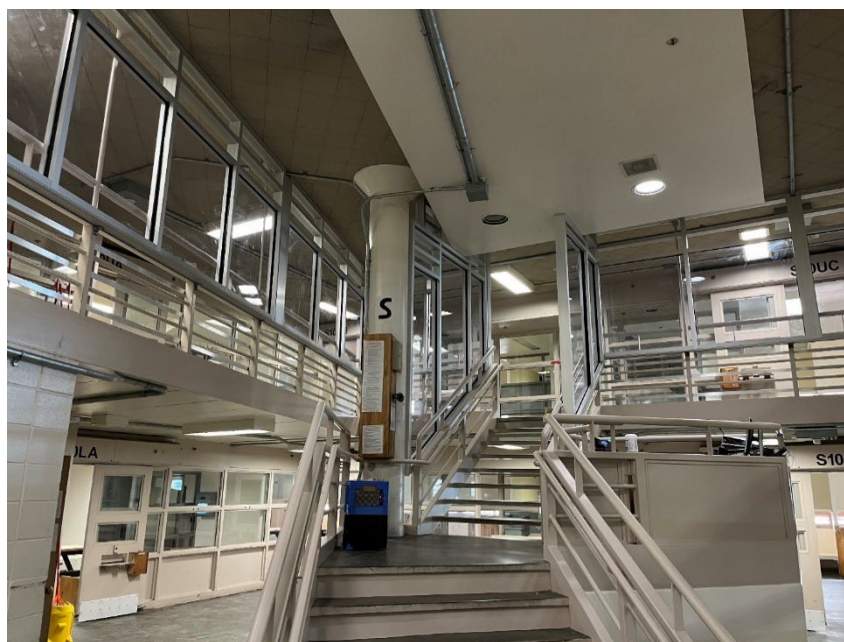


Figure 8: Retrofitted upper tiers at KCCF

All floors of the tower, except the eleventh floor, have been retrofitted. Due to the classification of residents housed on the eleventh floor, residents are always escorted and restrained when coming onto or leaving the floor; operationally negating the need for retrofitting.

In addition to these large-scale changes to bunks and railings, DAJD has retrofitted some other areas of concern, such as exposed areas around TV casings in the dayrooms, some exposed areas of conduit, and some electrical switches that had 45-degree coverings that could potentially be problematic. These areas of concerns have been encased in plexiglass or otherwise retrofitted. Shower curtains have been replaced with tear away curtains, and phone cords in visitation areas have been shortened to address any area that could potentially be used as a ligature tie-off point.

#### *Removal of Tearable Sheets*

Finally, while not technically a physical plant change, DAJD has eliminated the use of sheets in the detention facilities which has eliminated a major source of suicide attempts in the facility. In previous years, all residents were issued a sheet and a blanket at booking. Upon examining the common factors in suicide attempts, DAJD determined that the sheets were being torn and used as ligatures in many of these incidents. In October 2022, all sheets were replaced by the issuance of additional, tear-resistant blankets.

#### *Other Changes*

Other prevention measures include eliminating the ability to order larger quantities of medications through commissary. Residents can get medication in smaller doses or from JHS directly, but the elimination of larger quantities means less opportunity to stockpile medications that could result in harm to residents.

Importantly, since the completion of these focused activities, DAJD has not had a suicide.

#### *iv. Naloxone*

Another tool that DAJD uses to mitigate drug overdoses and improve the safety of residents, is the aggressive deployment and use of Naloxone, sometimes referred to by its brand name, NARCAN. Naloxone is a medicine that can rapidly reverse an opioid overdose. Between DAJD and JHS, Naloxone is abundantly available throughout the detention facilities. Naloxone is available:

- on every floor of the KCCF;
- in every housing unit at the MRJC;
- in every DAJD vehicle;
- at every staff station;
- on all JHS carts; and
- with every automated external defibrillator (AED) in the facilities.

In addition:

- every weapons-qualified officer carries it on their person;
- every Sergeant carries it on their person; and
- every officer has the option to carry it on their person, and many do.

Due to the toxic nature of fentanyl and its prevalence in the Puget Sound area, DAJD also makes Naloxone available to non-uniformed staff in non-detention areas of its facilities such as in the records unit, the administrative offices, and even in the DAJD Director's office in the KCCH. DAJD also has made Naloxone available in public areas of the detention facilities.

Also installed in the facilities are posters, in multiple languages, that guide a reader on how to take action if they suspect an overdose, including how to administer Naloxone (see Figure 9).

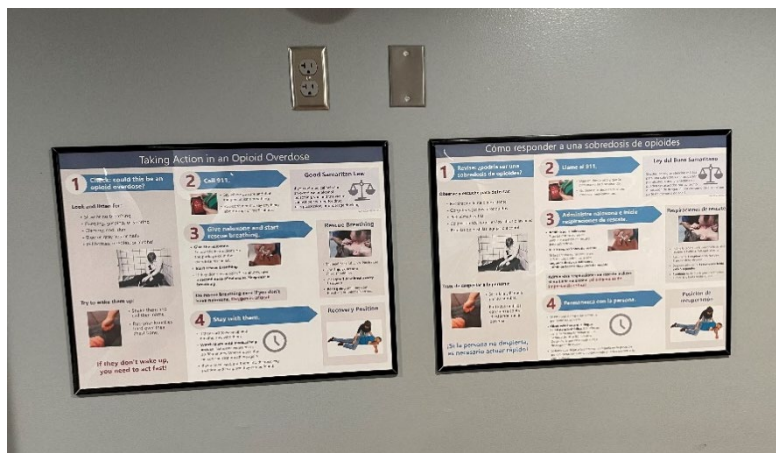


Figure 9: Instructions on intervening in a suspected overdose

When Naloxone is used, staff are instructed to contact Maintenance and Supply to replace the supply. In nearly all Naloxone uses in the adult detention facilities, JHS also requests that the resident be transported to the hospital for follow-up care. DAJD and JHS aggressively treat any suspected drug overdose as if it is a known or completed overdose; therefore, data regarding the actual incidence of true overdoses is difficult to ascertain. DAJD does track Naloxone use in its Jail Management System (JMS), and a chart of deployments for the last two years appears as Figure 10.

In November 2024, Public Health – Seattle & King County installed a vending machine at the MRJC that vends free Naloxone, fentanyl test strips, and other supplies intended to reduce the risk of overdose (see Figure 11). The machine installed at the MRJC was grant-funded, and DAJD is hopeful that funds may be available to install a similar machine in a public area at the KCCF.

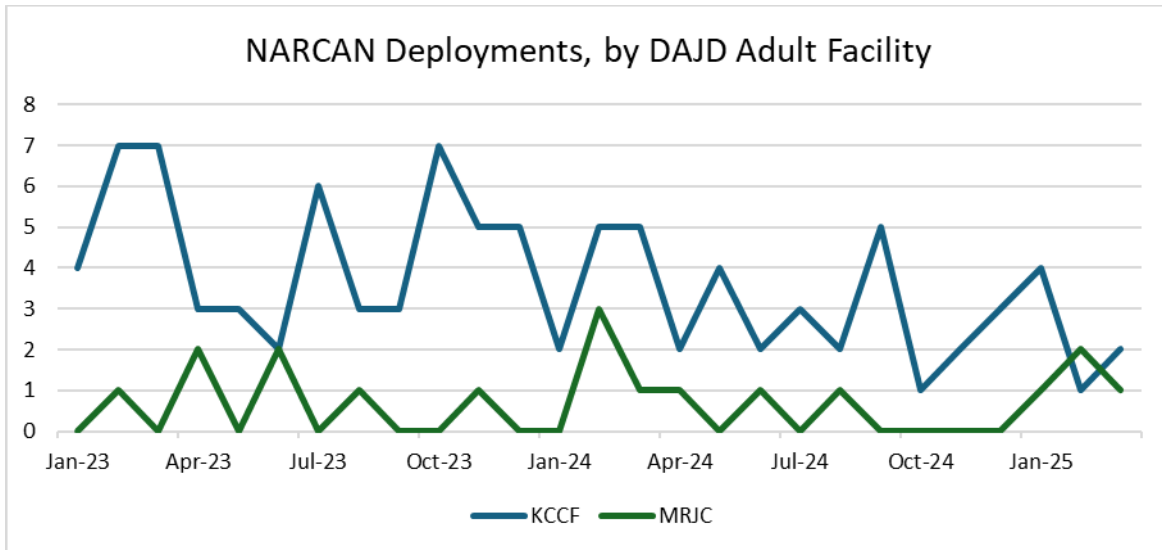


Figure 10: NARCAN deployments at DAJD adult facilities



Figure 11: Naloxone vending machine in public area of MRJC

#### *v. Drug Interdiction Workgroup*

Drug interdiction and treatment require close coordination between many aspects of DAJD operations, as well as with JHS and partner law enforcement agencies. To aid in that coordination, DAJD started a drug interdiction workgroup in the summer of 2023. The group meets monthly and includes adult and juvenile operations as well as the Internal Investigations Unit (IIU) Captain. The drug interdiction workgroup reviews Naloxone deployments, reviews and discusses any contraband that might be related to drug use in the facilities, and engages in investigations to identify and disrupt pathways of drug entry into the detention facilities.

#### *vi. Drug Identification Technology*

In April 2024, DAJD purchased two TruNarc handheld narcotics analyzers (see Figure 12) for use in identifying unknown substances in its detention facilities. The TruNarc contains a library with the



chemical compounds of more than 500 controlled substances that can be identified with a single test. The library is updated every six months. The library also includes pre-cursor chemicals so that even if a specific drug cannot be identified, the TruNarc can identify potential cutting agents that will alert officers to the likelihood of drugs being present in the facility. The scan takes approximately one minute to process, which allows for very rapid identification of substances that may have been ingested, allowing DAJD and JHS to act swiftly to prevent adverse medical effects or overdoses.



Figure 12: One of DAJD’s TruNarc handheld drug detection devices

The TruNarc can scan for drugs through plastic or glass, which reduces handling by DAJD staff and reduces the risk of exposure and contamination. The test results are saved in the machine, which also provides a report that is accepted by the PAO for prosecution, reducing the transfer and movement of drugs. This also means DAJD does not have to take the additional step of repackaging drugs to send to the state crime lab.

The TruNarc machine itself is a small, handheld device that is portable and therefore can be used anywhere in the adult facilities and deployed at CCFJC when needed.

#### *vii. Partnership with Superior Court Adult Drug Diversion Court*

DAJD also partners with King County Superior Court’s Adult Drug Diversion Court to highlight the services it provides to residents with Superior Court charges that are eligible for the program. Posters located around the adult facilities alert residents to the existence of drug diversion court and provide information about how to contact the Court to determine eligibility (see Figure 13).

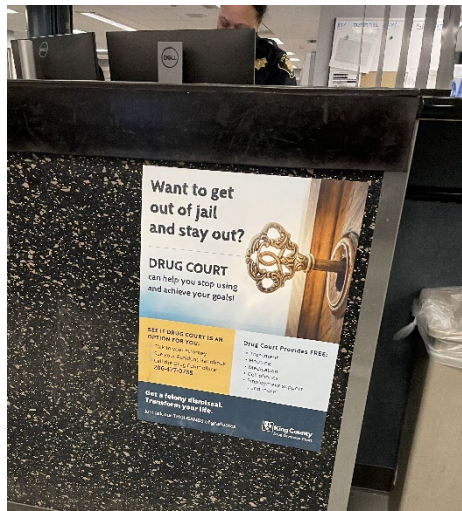


Figure 13: Adult Drug Diversion Court poster inside a DAJD facility

**Improvement, Expansion, and Implementation of Safety Technology:** This section discusses high-level gaps in DAJD’s use of safety technologies. It also discusses areas where there is a desire to expand coverage and proposed new implementations, including status, project schedule, budget, and funding where applicable. For security purposes, it does not include full scope, specific details, or gaps in coverage.

#### A. Body Scanners

The body scanning technology in use at DAJD is like that which would be seen in the airport, except that the technology in use at DAJD uses small amounts of ionizing radiation, whereas airport body scanners do not. Because the machines in use at DAJD use ionizing radiation technology, their use is regulated by the DOH.

DOH recently issued a new rule that restricts a detention facility’s use of the body scanners to a certain radiation level (and prohibits the use of ionizing radiation scanners on anyone under the age of 18). DAJD understands that the new DOH rule stems from its understanding of the Washington State Department of Corrections’ use of the machines, which is different and more frequent than DAJD’s use. DAJD is currently pursuing a variance that would allow for more utilization of the existing machines. In addition, DAJD is in discussions with the PSB and the ORM to pursue funding to purchase new millimeter wave machines (similar to body scanners used at airports) that would not be restricted by the DOH rules.

#### B. Fixed / Facility Cameras

DAJD is currently engaged in a funded capital project to replace analog cameras in KCCF and MRJC. The Department expects that the new cameras will be fully operational in both facilities by the end of 2026, with rolling implementation beginning in 2025. This project will also upgrade associated technology that provides access to monitoring and recordings.

While the Department finds video recordings beneficial, in quickly unfolding incidents, a cellphone camera is not always at the ready, and therefore body-worn cameras would be preferable (see Body-Worn Cameras section below).

#### C. Radios

DAJD has been experiencing some deficiencies within the DAS signals at KCCH and KCCF. Progress is being made to improve the three legacy systems involved, and the Department is engaged in an ongoing and productive collaboration with FMD, KCIT, and the County's outside vendors to address the problems.

#### D. Duress Alarms

Duress alarm technology has progressed since it was last updated at DAJD, and a system upgrade is needed to ensure system continuity and officer safety. DAJD has gathered vendor bids to assess the feasibility of replacing the duress alarm system. Although the purchase would be subject to a competitive bid process, initial estimates indicate that replacement of the system at MRJC could cost as much as \$1.3 million, expansion to KCCF could cost \$2.4 million, and expansion to CCFJC could cost \$700,000. These costs are not inclusive of facility infrastructure work that may be required. There is currently no identified funding for this potential safety improvement.

Some newer duress alarm technology that DAJD is investigating includes smaller devices, similar in size and form to an ORCA card, that includes an emergency button. Because these cards are smaller and more portable, they have the potential to be issued to partners at JHS, and other non-DAJD personnel that provide services at the MRJC.

#### E. Body-Worn Cameras

DAJD is particularly interested in pursuing the use of body-worn cameras (BWC) and has reached out to several partner agencies over the last few years to learn more about their experiences with using BWCs. The Department has begun to consider policy, use, and implementation of body-worn cameras, however, there is no immediately identifiable funding source for procuring the cameras. DAJD is currently working with the PSB grants team to identify and apply for available opportunities. DAJD had expected to apply for a federal grant early in 2025, but as of this writing, the targeted grant the Department intended to pursue has not been released. DAJD will continue to monitor if and when these grants become available again in the future. DAJD would seek funding to purchase enough cameras for individual issuance to all Corrections Officers and Sergeants, as well as Juvenile Detention Officers and Supervisors.

DAJD anticipates a potential upfront cost of at least \$1.5 million over a biennium, for implementation, software, and staff. Ongoing staff costs of at least three additional FTEs would likely be needed to manage the inventory, respond to increased public records retention and request functions, and to administer the contract and resolve technical issues. Agencies that have instituted BWC programs have also needed to add investigative resources to be able to manage review of much larger quantities of video data/footage. Annual licensing after implementation is estimated at \$250,000 per year.

While not fully established in policy, DAJD leadership are researching and discussing how the cameras would be used in its detention facilities. At a minimum, cameras would be activated during all high-risk situations such as uses of force, cell extractions, and IIU interviews. Likewise, they would be used during security rounds, transports outside the facilities, and in response to any emergency. The cameras would



likely not be activated outside these scenarios. Sensitive situations where the need for privacy is heightened, such as during interactions with medical providers, will need to be discussed and addressed in policy.

The benefits to DAJD, the County, and residents to DAJD's use of body-worn cameras are like those generally cited for law enforcement use of cameras. These include having access to interviews and evidence for investigatory purposes that can benefit both County staff, as well as residents, by providing an unbiased record of an interaction. Law enforcement agencies report decreased risk management costs due to better evidence that can be used to adjudicate grievances, complaints, uses of force, and ultimately the cost savings of avoided litigation related to these types of incidents.

## **VI. Conclusion**

The top priority of the DAJD is to ensure the safety and security of staff and residents. The Department accomplishes this through effective training, policies, procedures, and supervision, but also through the effective use of safety technologies. The Department employs contraband detectors to identify narcotics and items that could be used as weapons, cameras to monitor movements and incidents, and radios and duress alarms to facilitate regular and emergency communications within the facilities. In recent years, DAJD has made improvements to the technologies it uses and launched several initiatives to prevent and reduce harm, including introduction of a drug detection dog and handler, electronic processing and delivery of mail to reduce introduction of contraband to the facilities, suicide prevention strategies (including bunk retrofits, jump barriers, active monitoring with Public Health's Jail Health Services of residents who have engaged in self-harm, and removal of materials that could be used for self-harm), stocking of NARCAN throughout the facilities, creation of a drug interdiction workgroup, and introduction of a drug identification tool.

Driven by the County's values and the Executive's True North, DAJD is always looking for ways to solve problems that arise and to improve services for the benefit of its residents and staff. To that end, DAJD is engaged in an ongoing and productive collaboration with FMD, KCIT, and the County's outside vendors to address deficiencies in the radio systems at KCCF and KCCH. DAJD is also exploring better options for body scanning technology, increasing the number and functionality of fixed cameras installed at KCCF and MRJC, assessing the feasibility of replacing duress alarm systems, and considering the introduction of body-worn cameras. Not all of these desired improvements are currently funded, but the Department is dedicated to seeking outside funding where available, and responsibly stewarding the resources that it has to achieve its goal of keeping residents and staff safe and secure.