



ASSESSMENT RESULTS ARE IN: PTSD, DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS COMMON AMONG MICHIGAN CORRECTIONS AND FORENSIC OFFICERS

This week, MCO released the findings of the corrections fatigue/PTSD assessment members took late last year. Desert Waters Correctional Outreach, a non-profit corporation which specializes in the health and well-being of corrections professionals, conducted the assessment, analyzed the results, and wrote a detailed report.

Key findings include:

- About 34 percent of corrections officers/forensic security assistants who completed the assessment battery met diagnostic criteria for PTSD on a valid screening assessment instrument. For those who work in high-security facilities, about 39 percent met PTSD criteria on that instrument.
- About 36 percent of corrections officers/forensic security assistants who completed the assessment battery met criteria for a depressive disorder on a screening instrument. For those who work in high-security prisons, the rate was 42 percent.
- About 25 percent of corrections officers/forensic security assistants who completed the assessment battery met criteria for both PTSD and depression. For those who work in high-security prisons, the rate was about 31 percent.
- About 5 percent of corrections officers/forensic security assistants who completed the assessment battery were

classified as being at high risk of suicide.

Staff with more than 10 years of seniority and those working in high-security settings were more likely to show signs of mental health issues, the study found.

Read the full research report at mco-seiu.org. From the website you can also read a press release issued Wednesday, that has already been picked up by the Lansing State Journal, Gongwer, and Corrections.com.

The assessment was anonymous, and its findings don't diagnose anyone.

But it does show the cumulative effects of staff's prolonged exposure to violence, injury, and death that commonly occur in prisons. Running into violent situations – instead of away from them, like our instincts dictate – wears on officers' and FSAs' physical and mental well-being. Those experiences and their impact ripple out to officers' and FSAs' spouses, children, parents, friends, and others.

MCO and MDOC are joining forces with Desert Waters to develop a program that helps staff recognize and cope with mental health issues. At this time, the program is contingent on grant funding.

"This is a big task, and there's no time to lose," said Cary Johnson, MCO Executive Board member and point-person on the union's PTSD awareness work. "If our

American soldiers can change their culture to remove the stigma on PTSD, so can we as correctional officers and FSAs."

"In Michigan and around the country, corrections reform is an ongoing, important conversation. In the past, corrections officers have felt like their voices were overlooked when reforms happened. If reform is being discussed, we want corrections officers and their needs to be part of that," MCO Vice President/Chief of Staff Andy Potter said.

To the members who took the assessment last fall: thank you. Each and every one of you played a vital role in this study.

Raising awareness of PTSD is part of Tomorrow's Union Today, MCO's initiatives for member strength and engagement. Watch your KYIs and the website for updates on the PTSD initiative and other Tomorrow's Union Today programs.

CONTRACT MAILING UPDATE

2016-2018 contracts have not yet hit the mail.

We hope to have the contract and an updated MCO bylaws book printed and mailed by mid-June. In the meantime, members can access the contract and bylaws at mco-seiu.org.

AROUND THE STATE: STF INMATES RETALIATE AFTER SHAKEDOWN

Three Central Michigan inmates ripped out sink pipes in a bathroom Wednesday.

The vandalism came in response to a shakedown, in which contraband TVs were confiscated.

The three Level I inmates were sent to temp seg, an officer said.

No one was injured.

An ICF inmate stabbed another prisoner Saturday with a homemade weapon resembling an ice pick.

The assaulted inmate was stabbed in the torso, but no serious injuries were reported.

The attack happened in a Level V unit shower.

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