



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DOJ OIG Releases Reports on Remote Inspections of Residential Reentry Centers in Brooklyn, New York, and Newark, New Jersey, Examining the Institutions' Responses to the Coronavirus Pandemic

Department of Justice (DOJ) Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz announced today the release of reports on remote inspections of two Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) contract Residential Reentry Centers (RRC): Brooklyn House RRC, operated by the CORE Services Group, Inc. (CORE), in Brooklyn, New York; and Toler House RRC, operated by the GEO Group, Inc. (GEO), in Newark, New Jersey. Inmates under the supervision of RRCs may reside at the RRC or in home confinement.

The OIG's findings included the following:

- **COVID-19 cases:**
 - Local conditions initially limited the availability of COVID-19 tests for inmates and staff and, therefore, the ability to confirm and manage positive cases.
 - The first Brooklyn House RRC inmate tested positive for COVID-19 on March 16. Between March 16 and May 12, nine inmates tested positive and no deaths were reported. As of October 2020, CORE reported no additional cases among inmates.
 - The first Toler House RRC inmate tested positive for COVID-19 on April 8. Between April 8 and April 17, two inmates, both on home confinement, tested positive. No deaths were reported. As of October 2020, GEO reported no additional cases among inmates.
 - **Guidance from the BOP and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:**
 - The BOP required its facilities to quarantine inmates being transferred to RRCs, but the BOP did not require RRCs to quarantine asymptomatic inmates, either upon their arrival at the RRC or when they departed the RRC for placement at home. Also, the BOP does not generally provide transportation for RRC inmates, thereby requiring inmates to use public, commercial, or personal transportation, potentially heightening the risk of COVID-19 spreading within RRCs and the community.
 - In accordance with BOP and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations, both RRCs suspended most forms of movement within their facilities and implemented enhanced social distancing measures.
 - In the absence of BOP requirements on use of personal protective equipment in general RRC settings, neither RRC fully implemented a universal mandatory face covering policy until late April, though some face coverings were made available earlier.
 - The RRCs did not promptly or consistently implement certain BOP screening directives.
 - **Alternative Home Custody Settings**
 - Both RRCs effectively used alternative home custody settings—such as home confinement and home visit passes—to move inmates out of the group facility environment. Between February
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and May, the population of inmates residing inside the facility decreased by more than 50 percent at Brooklyn House RRC and nearly 40 percent at Toler House RRC.

Today's reports do not include recommendations. Rather, our inspection reports are intended to assist the BOP and DOJ in identifying strategies to most effectively contain current and future COVID-19 outbreaks. Additional reports of the OIG's remote inspections will be released in the coming months as they are completed. The DOJ OIG also plans to prepare a capstone report providing BOP-wide conclusions and recommendations resulting from our inspections.

Report: Today's reports are available on the OIG's website at:

- <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/remote-inspection-core-services-group-incs-brooklyn-house-residential-reentry-center>
- <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/remote-inspection-geo-group-incs-toler-house-residential-reentry-center-newark-new-jersey>

Background: In April, the OIG initiated a total of 16 remote inspections of selected BOP-managed institutions; contract prisons; and RRCs, sometimes referred to as halfway houses, to examine whether their response to the COVID-19 pandemic was in compliance with DOJ and BOP policy and pandemic-related guidance issued by the CDC.

Our inspections have been conducted through telephonic interviews; review of BOP documents and complaints we have received; our analysis of data from the respective institutions; and the results of a survey we issued to employees of the BOP, contract prisons, and RRCs. The OIG conducted these inspections remotely because of CDC guidelines and DOJ policy on social distancing.

As part of its Release Preparation Program, the BOP has the authority to place inmates in RRCs, also known as halfway houses, or home confinement while serving the remainder of their sentences. An inmate placed in an RRC or home confinement remains in BOP custody. The DOJ OIG is separately conducting a review of the BOP's use of home confinement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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