



**SEIU Healthcare**  
United for Quality Care

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Krystal Myers, Registered Nurse  
Before the Appropriations Committee

Good Evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the committee. My name is Krystal Myers and I am a Registered Nurse with the Department of Corrections at MacDougall-Walker Correctional Institute.

We came before you last session to advocate for increased funding for healthcare in our prisons, and I would like to thank you for providing us with that increase. With this we have seen improvements such being able to replace necessary equipment that was out dated such as vital signs machines. Today I am here to ask for your continued support and consideration to increase our budget to allow for necessary education and training which would give nurses the updated tools needed to provide the best care in the most efficient, safe, caring and cost effective way.

In a recent meeting with the DOC Commissioner and the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus the Commissioner stated that one of the major limitations for training staff is finding adequate coverage to fill in for staff as they are trained. I completely agree with him. A solution to this problem would be to increase in the budget to allow for the hiring of full time Nurse Educators who would travel to the different facilities. This would allow for on-site training and the flexibility to accommodate nurses' schedules. This also allows for consistent implementation of policy and procedures between facilities as well as sharing of best practices on important topics such as emergency medical response techniques, use of new equipment and medications. With dedicated staff coordinating and focusing completely on education it would allow nurses the resources needed to ensure success.

In my other past nursing positions, it was mandatory to complete several hours in continuing education as a condition of employment. Training included topics such as safety, pharmacology, infectious disease, emergency preparedness, disease management and skills validations. These areas are extremely important for nurses to stay on top of their profession to ensure the best quality care to our patient.

An increase in our budget would also mean the ability to recruit and retain new nurses and providers. One of my responsibilities as a nurse at MWCI is to provide Prompt Care (which is a pilot program in which inmates sign up the night before to be seen by a nurse the next day). On any given day it is my responsibility to see upwards of 20 inmates. Unfortunately, on many days there aren't enough hours in the day to see everyone who has signed up. While doing Prompt Care we are also expected to do cuff checks, transfers, and handle emergencies. Then when an inmate is finally seen by a nurse in Prompt Care (as long as it isn't an emergency) it can then take 3 to 4 months for a provider to see them. This includes our chronic care patients. With extra posts added we would be able to better educate our patients on their conditions and be able to see our patients in a more timely fashion.

In conclusion, in order to provide the best quality of care to the inmates, I believe health services needs more education for staff, to focus on recruiting and to increase our staffing to better meet the needs of our aging population in a timely fashion.

I would like to finish with one of my favorite quotes by Florence Nightingale. "Let us never consider ourselves finished nurses... we must be learning all our lives."

Thank you for your time, consideration, and future support.