



Inmate Care at Cuyahoga County Corrections Center *Disability Rights Ohio*

People with disabilities are disproportionately represented in jail populations. For this reason, a physically accessible facility and access to meaningful medical and mental health treatment are imperative for individuals who are incarcerated. However, reports out of Cuyahoga County Corrections Center suggested that the facility was failing on several fronts, including healthcare and ADA compliance.

Disability Rights Ohio launched an investigation of Cuyahoga County Corrections Center in 2019, and over the course of 20 months—through site visits, meetings with administrators, and over 160 inmate interviews—determined that systemic issues at the facility threaten the health, safety, and legal rights of inmates.

Our investigation uncovered several key issues:

- Lack of access to meaningful medical care;
- Lack of access to meaningful mental health care; and
- An inaccessible facility.

CCCC says that there is more work to be done “to improve the operations of the CCCC and ensure appropriate access and healthcare services to inmates at CCCC—some of which are significant, long-term infrastructure changes.” DRO agrees and recommends CCCC do the following:

- **Reduce the jail population.** A smaller jail population would undoubtedly provide the opportunity for CCCC to evaluate and improve conditions at the facility while slowing the spread of COVID-19.
- **Implement an accessible and traceable grievance system that allows inmates to easily report concerns and receive quick and meaningful responses.** DRO also encourages CCCC to change its practice of being skeptical of a concern because it came from an inmate.
- **Conduct its own periodic interviews of a sample of inmates to identify concerns, trends, and patterns.** Additionally, CCCC should provide meaningful communication to inmates about their healthcare.
- **Develop policies and practices to comply with the ADA** and hire a dedicated Title II ADA Coordinator.
- **Fix architectural accessibility issues**, especially in the medical unit.

DRO supports the development of a diversion center that would allow individuals with psychiatric disabilities and substance abuse disorder to divert from the criminal justice system.