



Rick Staly, Sheriff

FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

"An honor to serve, a duty to protect."

NEWS RELEASE

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Flagler Sheriff Makes Major Changes to Jail Medical Issues Cancellation Letter to Medical Provider

Sheriff Rick Staly gave an update on the investigation into the death of inmate Anthony Fennick, 23, and the status of medical services at the Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility on Friday afternoon. Fennick was an inmate at the jail when he suffered a medical episode on February 4th and was transported to the hospital. He passed away on February 9th.

"As a father myself I cannot begin to imagine the depth of their loss and sorrow," Sheriff Rick Staly said. "We have been continuously keeping them informed on the investigation. As Sheriff, I accept full responsibility. I promise the Fennick family a thorough and transparent investigation. The Fennick family and the citizens of Flagler County deserve answers and I intend to get them. We will leave no stone unturned."

The medical examiner will not have an official cause of death for another 60-90 days. Evidence gathering is continuing with interviews with all possible witnesses such as Sheriff's personnel and inmates, reviewing all medical documents, and analyzing all phone calls and CCTV recordings. The investigations are ongoing and will not be done for some time.

While the investigation is underway, Sheriff Staly felt strongly enough to terminate the contract with Armor Correctional Health Care Service, the contracted medical provider for the Flagler County Jail. The FCSO General Counsel notified Armor on Friday that the contact will be terminated in 90 days, the required amount of notice dictated in the contract.

"In response to this tragedy, Armor has shown little interest in anything other than denying responsibility and trying to bill us for even more money," Sheriff Staly continued. "When we hired them, they promised to be a full partner and provide the care and services I expected, always be responsive, and effectively address any problems. I don't believe they have kept that promise to the Sheriff's Office or to our inmates."

An RFP to identify and select a new medical services provider was issued on Friday afternoon. There

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are several nationally known correctional health care service providers who successfully provide medical care at correctional institutions throughout America. FCSO will scrutinize their proposals, ask all the right questions, and select the one which is best for the inmates and the taxpayers.

In addition to changes to the medical service provider, Sheriff Staly also announced other changes at the jail as it relates to inmate medical care.

- All jail supervisors and jail administrators will always be immediately notified of any and all inmate medical concerns. This will allow immediate oversight of any medical concerns that may require immediate attention.
- During the booking medical screening process, inmates will be offered a medical release form they can complete allowing medical information to be shared with authorized family or friends. This enables full communication with family members given the very strict federal law governing patient medical privacy.
- Signage is being added to each housing unit and the inmate handbook encouraging inmates to report medical or other concerns to jail personnel for themselves or other inmates.
- To assist family members, a dedicated jail medical page has been added to the FCSO website providing information and direct contact numbers to include the Inmate Medical Department, Inmate Services Director, and Division Chief.
- A hotline phone number for inmate medical concerns has been assigned and will be available 24-hours a day.
- The medical fee schedule has been re-evaluated and Sheriff Staly has directed the following medical services offered with no co-pay: follow-up care; mental health services; and for an inmate or staff referral to medical services.
- If an inmate is transported to the hospital for a critical emergency, the family or listed emergency contact person will be immediately notified.

The results of all investigations will be released when they are complete. FCSO will continue to be honest, open, and transparent. FCSO's goal is to stop the cycle of crime and addiction which is why detention staff have significantly increased the quantity and quality of programs at the jail aimed at ending substance abuse and guiding inmates towards educational and employment opportunities.

In addition, the jail was awarded state accreditation by the Florida Commission on Corrections Accreditation for the first time in its 100-year history in October 2018. Commission assessors reviewed all policies and procedures and confirmed the jail adheres to the best correctional practices before awarding the accreditation. Only 34 jails in Florida hold this distinction. Only two jails in the 7th

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judicial circuit are accredited: St. Johns County and Flagler County jails.

“To the Fennick family, I am very sorry,” Sheriff Staly said. “I can’t bring Anthony back but I can work to prevent another family from ever experiencing the loss of a loved one in our custody. The changes I am making are important and significant and consistent with my ongoing efforts to continually improve and make your Sheriff’s Office the best it can be.”

The press conference is available in its entirety on the FCSO Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/flaglercounty.sheriffsoffice/videos/336135723680528/>

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