

**Statement from Sheriff Adrian Garcia**  
**December 8, 2014**

The investigation into the treatment of inmate Goodwin continues and remains a priority.

As promised, we have provided all information and evidence collected and have shared it with the Department of Justice and the Harris County District Attorney's Office to determine whether any criminal laws were violated. To that end, we want prosecutors to have full access to all and any employees who can help explain how this occurred. Accountability will be addressed; however, rushing to disciplinary transfers, suspend, or terminate employees without getting the facts first maybe not bring the best results that will prevent this from happening again.

In addition, the administrative changes announced in October continue to be implemented and refined. The newly announced Jail Compliance and Inspection Bureau is now operational by getting staff assigned, trained, and focused on their mission, which is to ensure that we are being compliant with state and federal requirements. These changes are not familiar in other jail operations, as a result we are treading a path with few to no examples to follow; but this is our commitment to learn from what has happened.

My staff and I remain committed to not seeing this happen again within the county jail system, but until Texas no longer ranks 49th in the United States in per capita dollars spent on treating all forms of mental illness and not just the "Big Three" – Major Depression, Schizophrenia and Bi-Polar Disorder, then Harris County's jail and other jails across the state will continue to struggle with this delicate population. The state's standing policy to withdraw eligibility for Medicaid-qualified inmates puts the mentally ill at an extreme disadvantage upon reentry into the community. Other states merely suspend eligibility making access easily obtained upon reentry.

In Texas however, the mentally ill are released from my care and custody stabilized, only left facing a complicated web of red tape in order to re-qualify for benefits. Unless legislative action is taken, the process is impractical for the mentally ill who require consistent adherence to a regimen of medication and continued treatment.

Medicaid's coverage for the mentally ill in Texas profoundly undermines the recommendations of mental health care professionals in the field. Rates discourage providers from providing the comprehensive care required of chronic mental illness.

We will continue to work to do our very best, and the reforms I am putting in place in the county jail will help, but we will need all the help possible to make further progress and getting the mentally ill the care they should have access to outside the jail.

This incident and those who may be involved is not indicative of the example of the great majority of my employees. – Sheriff Adrian Garcia