



# Wisconsin Department of Corrections

Governor Tony Evers | Secretary Jared Hoy

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **DOC holds first Friends and Family Forum**

*Meeting is first in series of efforts to continue engaging family in rehabilitation*

**WAUPUN, Wis.** – Department of Corrections (DOC) Secretary Jared Hoy along with much of the agency’s leadership team met with more than 40 friends and family members of persons in our care Wednesday at the Kolb Center on the Fox Lake Correctional Institution campus.

The meeting – a DOC Friends and Family Forum – is the first in a series of efforts designed to continue improving communication between the department and the loved ones of persons in our care and clients on supervision.

“Family and friends play a huge role in determining whether an individual succeeds in the community,” Hoy said. “With DOC’s mission of safety and rehabilitation, we need to partner with families and friends throughout the process. Their support is crucial to success with rehabilitation.”

Attendees were broken into small groups to discuss topics such as strengthening families, treatment and health care, classification and life in DOC facilities, complaint systems, and reentry. DOC staff were present to listen and to take note of suggestions.

After these discussions, Hoy was able to answer some of the questions friends and family submitted in advance on topics ranging from accountability to phone service and from vendors to visitation.

“I think it was a good first step in the right direction to be able to have those open conversations to know we are actually being heard,” said Emily Curtis, who has a loved one incarcerated at Stanley Correctional Institution. “But I think my ultimate opinion will be formed by what comes from this.”



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In the coming days, DOC will post the answers to additional questions on the friends and family webpage at [doc.wi.gov/friendsandfamily](https://doc.wi.gov/friendsandfamily).

While the DOC may not be able to implement every suggestion, attendees made valuable suggestions on ways to enhance visiting experiences as well as ways to help support families new to DOC, Hoy said.

“It’s important for the department to listen to people directly impacted by our work and take their opinions, ideas and feelings into consideration as we move forward,” Hoy said.

DOC intends to continue engaging with friends and family and will continue to receive feedback from attendees for potential future forums or other events.

“This was our very first event specifically for friends and family,” Hoy said. “We want to know what family and friends would like from events like this so the department can better engage with them.”