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NOVEMBER 3, 1887



INCORPORATED
MAY 2, 1949

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April 10, 2026

Governor Maura T. Healey
Massachusetts State House, 24 Beacon St.
Office of the Governor, Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

RE: Tewksbury State Hospital

Dear Governor Healey:

On behalf of the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association, I am writing to respectfully request a comprehensive review by the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security regarding recent security policy changes at Tewksbury State Hospital, specifically the removal of less-lethal tools from Public Safety personnel.

This decision raises significant concerns for the safety of staff, patients, visitors, and the surrounding community. Public Safety Officers assigned to the hospital operate in a uniquely challenging environment that includes individuals experiencing severe mental health crises, behavioral instability, and, at times, violent tendencies. The removal of less-lethal tools, such as pepper spray and similar defensive equipment, eliminates critical options for de-escalation and response, leaving officers with fewer means to safely manage dangerous situations.

The scope of risk on the campus is not theoretical. In 2025 alone, campus Public Safety personnel responded to 478 assaults on hospital grounds. This volume of violent incidents underscores the reality that officers are routinely confronted with dangerous and unpredictable situations. Removing less-lethal tools in this environment does not reduce risk, it increases it for everyone involved.

We are particularly concerned that this change appears to have been made despite the completion of a thorough, months-long security assessment. That assessment, which involved detailed analysis of risks, operations, and best practices, should be a central component of any review conducted by the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security. Any policy changes that contradict or disregard the findings of such a comprehensive evaluation warrant careful reexamination.

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Additionally, the decision to remove less-lethal tools appears to be based, in part, on an incident involving a patient who became violent, assaulted staff members, and armed himself with a pipe. While incidents of this nature are serious and warrant review, they also underscore the very real and unpredictable dangers faced by Public Safety personnel.

Situations like this reinforce, not diminish, the need for appropriate tools, training, and protocols to ensure safe and effective outcomes for staff, patients, and responders alike.

The removal of less-lethal tools not only places Public Safety Officers at increased risk but also has broader implications. It may result in a greater reliance on local law enforcement for incidents that could otherwise be handled safely on-site, thereby increasing the burden on municipal police departments and potentially delaying critical response times.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that your administration direct the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security to:

- Conduct a full and independent review of the decision to remove less-lethal tools from Public Safety personnel at Tewksbury State Hospital;
- Incorporate and closely examine the findings of the previously completed comprehensive security assessment;
- Evaluate the operational, safety, and community impacts of these changes; and
- Engage with law enforcement professionals and security experts to ensure that policies reflect best practices in safety and risk management.

The Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association remains committed to working collaboratively with your administration to ensure that policies impacting public safety are informed, balanced, and grounded in practical experience.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter and for your continued commitment to the safety and well-being of the Commonwealth.

The Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association, Inc.

By and through:



Chief Michael J. Bradley, Jr. (Ret.)
Executive Director
Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association