



## A Response to Rachel Accurso

*Kristen Dauss, MD, Vice President and Chief Medical Officer, CoreCivic*

Dear Ms. Rachel,

Thank you for your letter. In it, you wrote about the Golden Rule and loving your neighbor as yourself. Those teachings shape how I understand my own work. Caring for the vulnerable and overlooked is, to me, a calling as much as a profession. It's precisely because I take that calling seriously that I want to be honest with you about what I see at the Dilley Immigration Processing Center (DIPC), not to dismiss your concerns, but because I believe you would want the truth from someone who is actually there.

Some of what you've heard is not accurate. The water at DIPC comes from the same municipal source the surrounding community drinks. The City of Dilley Water Department conducts monthly independent tests on DIPC's water supply to verify its safety and cleanliness for drinking. Consumer Confidence water quality reports, which are available for public review, are also provided annually by the City, consistent with the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. State officials at the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality have also performed their own assessments, confirming that the water is safe and clean for consumption. As an added measure, locations where drinking water is accessed at the facility are equipped with filters to help ensure consistent taste quality. No family is charged for clean water — not the \$39 a day you mentioned, not anything.

The children and their families at DIPC receive healthcare that is clinically rigorous and delivered with dignity. I want to be specific about what that means in practice:

- That means **timely medical evaluation by providers trained in pediatrics**, including general pediatricians, child and adolescent psychiatrists, therapists and psychologists.
- It means **trauma-informed mental health screening** at intake, using validated clinical tools, with ongoing reassessment and access to continued support.
- It means an **interdisciplinary team, including nurses, dentists, advanced practice providers and specialists**, operating within a medical home model to ensure continuity of care.

We're acutely aware that children in these circumstances carry a particular kind of vulnerability. Our approach reflects that. Children have access to educational programming, structured recreation and creative activities, not as amenities, but because we understand the clinical role that stability, routine and connection play in supporting resilience and reducing harm.

I understand that you may not want to take our word for it, but take the word of local and state agencies who independently ensure standards for things like water quality. Take the word of Democratic U.S. Representative Henry Cuellar who visited the DIPC in May and



commented on a number of these issues, including food, water and medical care, beginning at 4:44 in this Facebook [post](#).

I also want to be clear about something that's often absent from these conversations: family residential centers have operated under federal authority since the Obama administration. CoreCivic does not set or enforce immigration laws. But we do ensure that every person in our care, as determined by the federal government, receives safe, humane and appropriate treatment while that law is administered.

I understand that accounts circulating online and in the media paint a different picture of DIPC. I take those accounts seriously because I take child welfare seriously. What I would ask of people, including you and your followers, is to reckon honestly with complexity and to resist the pull toward conclusions drawn entirely from a distance.

It's easy, and perhaps emotionally satisfying, to condemn from the outside. It's harder, and I believe more meaningful to be present in these environments, doing the work required to care for people who need it most. That's where my colleagues and I are, every day.

You wrote that you hold on to hope for the children at DIPC. So do I. On that, we are not so far apart.

Sincerely,  
Kristen Dauss, MD  
Vice President and Chief Medical Officer