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County prison accredited by health care commission

Jail had been target of \$1.5M federal lawsuit

By Marcia Moore
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SUNBURY — Nineteen months after settling a class-action lawsuit for failing to provide adequate medical care and a safe environment for inmates, the Northumberland County Prison has been accredited by the National Commission on Correctional Health Care.

The North Second Street jail, which houses about 200 inmates daily, was inspected on

April 30 and May 1 and found to be in compliance with the organization's standards for health services, the county commissioners said in a released statement Thursday.

The accreditation process requires the facility to pass 67 standards, which are intended to improve the delivery and effectiveness of health services and reduce the risk of adverse patient outcomes and legal judgments, the release said.

The county settled a \$1.5 million lawsuit in October 2010 filed by the Lewisburg Prison Project, a nonprofit inmate advocacy group, in federal court alleging conditions at the 135-year-old jail were unsafe

and inmates were receiving inadequate medical care.

As part of the settlement, the county agreed to bring in PrimeCare Medical to provide and coordinate medical-related services at the jail, including dental care.

One of the inspectors said, "You pulled it off, going from disaster to where you are today in a year," the release said.

The commissioners expressed gratitude to Warden Roy Johnson and the jail staff, the county prison board and Harrisburg attorney Robert Hanna, of the Lavery, Faherty, Young and Patterson law firm, who represented the county in the lawsuit.