

State should probe charts, advocate says

Inmate medical records concern Lewisburg Prison Project official

SUNBURY—Lewisburg Prison Project officials are happy to hear Northumberland County is considering building a prison to replace its 130-year-old jailhouse.

However, the inmate advocate group is concerned that the lockup's medical services provider is conducting its own investigation into allegations of improper health care inside the aging facility's walls.

Lewisburg Prison Project officials said they are closely monitoring allegations made by two former employees of PrimeCare Medical Inc., Harrisburg, that inmates were not receiving proper medical attention and records were being doctored.

PrimeCare Medical Inc., confirmed it is addressing the accusations, and although it's good the company is investigating, an outside agency is needed, said Dave Sprout, a paralegal with the Lewisburg Prison Project.

"Even though these are only allegations, they are serious allegations and an outside agency like the Department of Health or someone like that should be doing this," he said.

Lewisburg Prison Project officials said they will attend the Northumberland County Prison board meeting Wednesday at the lockup, where it is expected PrimeCare will release the results of its probe.

That commissioners earlier this week discussed the possibility of building a new prison is great, Sprout said.

Commissioner Vinny Clausi made the announcement at Tuesday's meeting that he thinks there are too many issues at the Sunbury jail.

"There is just one problem after another going on there," he said. "I visited the prison for three straight days and I wish I could talk about it but I can't. All I can say is we need a new prison."

Clausi also said he would be willing to talk with the Lewisburg Prison Project at any time.

"I think that should be commended," Sprout said. "It's not an us-versus-them thing. And for the commissioner to say that is a good sign."

Conditions at the prison seem to be worsening with the recent confirmation of MRSA cases inside the prison, and Sprout said he thinks a new prison would improve everyone's attitude.

"I think it would be good for guards and inmates," he said. "It's tough on guards and inmates being in the old building and a new one I think would just bring a different mind set."