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OFFICE OF THE STATE COMPTROLLER

August 5, 2025

Daniel F. Martuscello III  
Commissioner  
Department of Corrections and Community Supervision  
1220 Washington Avenue  
Albany, NY 12226

Re: Controls Over Tablet and Kiosk Usage  
by Incarcerated Individuals  
Report 2024-F-28

Dear Commissioner Martuscello,

Pursuant to the State Comptroller's authority as set forth in Article V, Section 1 of the State Constitution and Article II, Section 8 of the State Finance Law, we have followed up on the actions taken by officials of the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision to implement the recommendations contained in our initial audit report, *Controls Over Tablet and Kiosk Usage by Incarcerated Individuals* (Report [2022-S-8](#)).

**Background, Scope, and Objective**

The Department of Corrections and Community Supervision's (DOCCS or Department) mission is to improve public safety by providing a continuity of appropriate treatment services in safe and secure facilities where the needs of the population are addressed, Incarcerated Individuals (or Individuals) in its custody are successfully prepared for release, and parolees under community supervision receive supportive services that facilitate a successful completion of their sentence. As of November 2024, DOCCS had responsibility for the confinement and rehabilitation of approximately 33,500 Individuals held in custody at its 42 State facilities.

To aid in addressing its mission and serve the needs of the Individuals in its custody, DOCCS contracted with Securus and its subsidiary JPay Inc. (Provider) to provide access to tablets and kiosks at no cost to Individuals. Tablets are loaned to Individuals in the general population, which they can use to access DOCCS-approved educational material; purchase DOCCS-approved music, videos, e-books, and other media; and communicate with family and friends using a fee-based secure messaging system through an account (JPAY Account) created on the Provider's website.

Individuals in specialty populations such as the Special Housing Unit, Residential Rehabilitation Unit, and Regional Mental Health Unit are allowed limited access to two types of tablets: a law library tablet that contains access to law library material such as legal books and journals, and a static content tablet that provides telephone access and DOCCS-approved, pre-loaded applications such as educational material, videos, e-books, music, and games. Additionally, one other type of tablet is used by four facilities that offer Incarcerated Individuals the opportunity to enroll in a tablet-based college program with Ashland University. At these

facilities, Incarcerated Individuals may be assigned one of 84 Ashland loaner tablets, if needed, to complete coursework and assignments.

Starting in 2024, DOCCS worked with the Provider to transition tablets used by the general population to the Unity Platform, which allows access to a secure network containing approved content and services via Wi-Fi, no longer requiring a kiosk for functionality. The Unity Platform also allows access to law library material and telephone, and supports the ability to perform necessary security updates automatically. The specialty populations will eventually migrate to the Unity Platform, which will allow for one tablet to be used in the general population and specialty units.

While the tablets used by the specialty populations for telephone access use Wi-Fi to receive periodic software updates, until the full migration to the Unity Platform is complete, no other tablets will be Wi-Fi enabled and must be synced to a kiosk at least every 30 days to receive periodic software and content updates. Prior to this migration, the tablet model used by the general population also needed to be synced to a kiosk to send or receive secure messages from an Individual's JPay account to friends' or family members' accounts. Both tablets and kiosks require periodic firmware and application upgrades performed by the Provider upon DOCCS's approval.

Tablets are distributed to new Incarcerated Individuals at one of three facilities that have a reception center and come with a protective case, set of earbuds, and a charger. Reception center staff send weekly inventory email updates with the number of tablets on hand to DOCCS's Central Office. All facilities have a package room or mailroom responsible for collecting broken or returned tablets and accessories and shipping them back to the Provider. Upon release or transfer out of DOCCS custody, or opting out of the tablet program, the Individual's assigned tablet shall be returned to the Provider, as outlined in DOCCS Directives. Those who choose to opt out must sign an Incarcerated Individual Tablet Program Opt Out form. As each facility fully migrates to the Unity Platform, the Provider will assign a field service client administrator technician responsible for monitoring trouble tickets and being on site at the facility on an agreed-upon schedule to issue or exchange tablets or to troubleshoot tablet-related issues.

DOCCS officials meet weekly with the Provider to discuss tablet program updates. Employees at each facility are responsible for conducting daily inspections of the physical security and condition of kiosks and the facility areas where kiosks have been installed. Any damage or evidence of tampering must be noted on a daily safety checklist form (Form 2095) and must be immediately reported to the facility Watch Commander. Kiosk-related issues noted on Form 2095 are sent to the facility maintenance office, which informs DOCCS's Central Office, which then notifies the Provider to address the identified issue. All completed forms are sent to the Fire Safety Officer, where they are stored. In addition to visual inspections, all secure messages are subject to content screening by authorized staff.

As of June 2025, there were 29,237 tablets—all on the Unity Platform—being used by Incarcerated Individuals in the general population and 1,014 operational kiosks in use at 42 facilities.

The objectives of our initial audit, issued on May 11, 2023, were to determine if DOCCS provided sufficient oversight to ensure that the independent network, kiosks, and tablets used by Individuals were secure, and whether secure messaging accessed by these Individuals complied with DOCCS Directives. The audit covered the period from February 2019 through

August 2022. The audit found that DOCCS did not provide sufficient oversight and monitoring of the tablet program that would enable it to enforce the policies and procedures outlined in its Directives. In response to this overarching finding, DOCCS asserted that it was not responsible for the tablet program, which it described as a relationship between the Provider and Individuals. This position resulted in limited assurance of compliance with DOCCS Directives. DOCCS did not know how many Individuals had opted in/out of the tablet program and did not internally monitor the number of active tablets at its facilities. Instead, DOCCS relied on the Provider to maintain these records at both the statewide and facility levels. Further, DOCCS did not verify the identity of community members corresponding with Individuals through secure messaging, and its secure message content screening process did not adequately capture all the risks to Individuals and others. Finally, DOCCS did not adequately oversee the security and configurations of certain assets and did not ensure systems were maintained at vendor-supported levels required to preserve the accuracy and integrity of DOCCS information.

The objective of our follow-up was to assess the extent of implementation, as of June 2025, of the seven recommendations included in our initial audit report.

### **Summary Conclusions and Status of Audit Recommendations**

DOCCS officials have made some progress in addressing the problems we identified in the initial audit report. Of the initial report's seven audit recommendations, one has been fully implemented, three have been partially implemented, and three have not been implemented.

### **Follow-Up Observations**

#### **Recommendation 1**

*Strengthen the Department's responsibility and role in the relationship between the Provider and Individuals for the tablet program.*

Status – Implemented

Agency Action – DOCCS entered into a contract with the Provider to transition to the Unity Platform provided on the new tablet hardware. The new contract, effective August 1, 2023, contains language related to oversight and monitoring that was not in the previous contract. The statement of work related to oversight and monitoring includes monthly reports detailing items such as the total secure messages sent and received, monthly purchase totals by Individuals, a facility breakdown of the number of Individuals participating in the tablet program, and ad hoc reports as necessary. In addition, according to DOCCS, weekly conference calls with the vendor to discuss all tablet issues and processes continue.

#### **Recommendation 2**

*Implement a process to ensure that Individuals' correspondence with community members via secure messaging complies with Department Directives.*

Status – Not Implemented

Agency Action – DOCCS has not implemented a process to ensure that Individuals' correspondence with community members via secure messaging complies with its Directives. In response to our questions on the recommendation status, DOCCS officials stated they disagreed with our recommendation. Despite disagreeing, they stated they

would update the Directives accordingly but did not give any other information or state how updating their Directives would address implementing a process in accordance with the requirement. As of June 2025, DOCCS officials stated they had not made any changes to the Directives because they were in the process of upgrading tablets to the Unity Platform.

### **Recommendation 3**

*Implement a process to ensure compliance with the negative correspondence/telephone list.*

Status – Not Implemented

Agency Action – DOCCS has not implemented a process to ensure compliance with the negative correspondence/telephone list. In response to our questions on the recommendation status, DOCCS officials stated they disagreed with our recommendation. Despite disagreeing, they stated they would update their Directives accordingly but did not give any other information or state how updating the Directives would address implementing a process in accordance with the requirement. As of June 2025, DOCCS officials stated they had not made any changes to the Directives because they were in the process of upgrading tablets to the Unity Platform.

### **Recommendation 4**

*Ensure that all kiosks located at facilities are visually inspected in accordance with Department Directives, and facilities are using updated daily Checklists to complete visual inspections of kiosks.*

Status – Partially Implemented

Agency Action – In January 2025, DOCCS reissued Directive 4064, which sets forth health and safety precautions to be followed by staff. The Directive reiterates that staff shall inspect all machinery and safety equipment in their areas daily to ensure it is in working order and to record these inspections on Form 2095. We performed site visits at two facilities to determine if they were following the Directive and completing Form 2095, which includes inspecting the kiosk tablet sync cable to ensure it is present and intact. At one facility, we determined that DOCCS staff had not been using Form 2095 for five of the 17 buildings reviewed. At that same facility, we also found one instance where Form 2095 was not fully completed or signed during one shift. At the second facility, we found that staff were completing Form 2095 for only two of the three required shifts. Facility staff stated this was due to staffing shortages.

### **Recommendation 5**

*Develop, implement, and adhere to an internal process to effectively monitor program participation and tablet inventory at both the facility and statewide levels.*

Status – Not Implemented

Agency Action – According to DOCCS officials, they are finalizing additional reports by facility with the vendor, and separate internal lists for program participation at each facility are kept, which executive-level staff review as necessary. In addition, ad hoc information is available directly through the NextGen secure communications platform, which, according to the contract, allows DOCCS to monitor messages and obtain reporting

and also provides the capability to turn tablet functionality on or off and manage video communication. However, despite access to these tools, and language related to oversight and monitoring in the new contract, as of June 2025, DOCCS had not provided any additional information or documentation to support it had developed, implemented, and was adhering to an internal process to effectively monitor program participation and tablet inventory at both the facility and statewide levels.

#### **Recommendation 6**

*Ensure that systems are maintained at vendor-supported levels, including those under the vendor's responsibility. Until then, the Department should work with ITS to submit the required exception request form.*

Status – Partially Implemented

Agency Action – DOCCS management submitted an Exception Request Form to the Chief Information Security Office (CISO) at the Office of Information Technology Services (ITS) regarding the non-compliant aspects of the previous tablet. As of February 2025, the CISO had not approved or signed off on this exception and no further action had been taken.

While on site at DOCCS, the audit team observed the new tablets and noted they had configurations similar to those of the previous tablets, which have been unsupported since 2019, raising the same concerns from the original audit regarding lack of adherence to a proper risk acceptance process.

#### **Recommendation 7**

*Implement the remaining technical recommendations detailed in the preliminary report.*

Status – Partially Implemented

Agency Action – During our initial audit, we issued a technical preliminary report with one recommendation that was not included in the public report. This recommendation has been partially implemented.

Major contributors to this report were Holly Thornton, Justin Dasenbrock, Anthony Calabrese, Jeffrey Dormond, Thomas Magnan, and Logan Frese.

DOCCS officials are requested, but not required, to provide information about any actions planned to address the unresolved issues discussed in this follow-up within 30 days of the report's issuance. We thank the management and staff of DOCCS for the courtesies and cooperation extended to our auditors during this follow-up.

Very truly yours,

Brandon Ogden  
Audit Manager

cc: Amanda Wittemeyer, Department of Corrections and Community Supervision