



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
250 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108-4619

MAURA T. HEALEY
Governor

KIMBERLEY DRISCOLL
Lieutenant Governor

KIAME MAHANIAH, MD, MBA
Secretary

ROBERT GOLDSTEIN, MD, PhD
Commissioner

Tel: 617-624-6000
www.mass.gov/dph

TEWKSBURY HOSPITAL
365 EAST SREET
TEWKSBURY, MA 01876
978-851-7321

Dear Colleagues,

Tewksbury Hospital is a place of healing. Every decision we make, from how we care for our patients to how we design our spaces to how we train our staff, should support our therapeutic mission. At the same time, like many hospitals, Tewksbury sometimes faces workplace violence and aggression from some patients.

We are serious about our responsibility to keep patients, staff, and visitors safe. We work to balance security and protection with healing and therapy. Every staff member helps create that care and safety.

With that balance in mind, I share an important clarification about our security practices. After extensive review, research, and consultation with clinical leaders, security professionals, and state agencies, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services has determined that Tewksbury Security Team Specialists will not carry or use defensive tactical weapons, including pepper gel, batons, and handcuffs.

This decision reflects careful consideration of several key factors:

- Clinical hospital guidance advises that weapons in hospital settings conflict with the therapeutic mission of care. The American Psychiatric Association agrees. The health care environment should be one of trust, dignity, and respect.
- The use of these tools in clinical spaces carries risks. It can make the situation worse, harming patients and staff.
- The U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services regulations make clear that restraint is a clinical intervention. It requires clinical authorization and oversight. Tewksbury Security Team Specialists are security professionals, not law enforcement or clinical staff.
- The state's policy aims to reduce inconsistencies in practice and risk. This action brings Tewksbury Hospital in line with the other DPH and DMH hospitals.

I want to assure nurses, clinical staff, support staff, and others who work with patients: your safety matters deeply. This policy does not weaken our commitment to protecting you. It means we are relying on approaches that work best in health care.

Over the past year, we have made significant, meaningful progress in campus security. We have worked alongside the Tewksbury Police Department. Together, we have modernized our security operations and upgraded technology and equipment. We have improved coordination with local first responders and strengthened our de-escalation training. That work continues.

Our Security Team Specialists are empathetic and service-oriented when working with our patients. Our clinical approach and this security policy strengthen our ability to prevent and resolve conflicts. To support this, we will continue to:

- Invest in advanced, non-chemical crisis prevention and de-escalation training
- Enhance coordination with clinical leadership during behavioral emergencies
- Standardize visitor screening and campus safety practices
- Improve incident reporting, communication, and follow-up
- Strengthen collaboration with our labor partners

When clinical and non-physical actions cannot manage a situation, the next step is to call law enforcement. That protocol remains in place.

I want to thank our Security Team Specialists. You perform difficult and important work every day. I also thank our nurses, clinicians, and every member of our extraordinary team. We are so grateful for your devotion to our patients and our community. We will continue investing in your safety, training, and tools you need to do your jobs with confidence.

We will share more guidance and training opportunities in the coming weeks. In the meantime, please reach out to your supervisors or leadership team with any questions or concerns.

Thank you for your continued commitment to safety, compassion, and excellence in care.

Amy Dumont, CEO

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amy Dumont". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.