

## **Meeting - September 4, 2024**

### **Attendance:**

Gina Mitchell  
Faris Ilyas  
Natalie Fiorenzo  
Matt Graham  
Lucas Marquez (facilitation)  
Kandra Clark  
Rachel Golden  
Chelsea Chard  
Jemarley McFarlane  
Nicole Levy  
Mik Kinkead (notes)  
Michael Griffin  
Dori Lewis  
Saloni Sethi  
Valerie Greisokh  
Andy Bowen

### **Draft Agenda:**

- Intros of new members
- Updates from any member present
- Follow-up questions circulated 8/21
- Hearing on 9/24
  - Rachel, Faris, Kandra, Natalie, Lucas, Mik, Dori to meet and work on comments
  - Does anyone else plan to speak? Saloni, yes if asked by counsel, Nicole will be there for Q&A, BOC will talk internally either for 9/24 or 10/2, NYC CHR is discussing as well
- Any new items?
  - Reminder from last month: CHS' Gender-Related Services team is looking for information about CBOs and hotlines that are open to receiving calls from gender-expansive people while they are incarcerated. If you have any leads or recommendations please let Nicole know.

## **Questions for September Meeting**

### **ReEntry Orgs:**

(From March 2023) Ronald: I am not on the drafting committee, but 2 meetings ago we brought up reentry and fleshing out programs that can be included in the next report. Not an expert in reentry, is there anyone here that would like to partner or direct me to someone?

- In March 2023 Ronald said : “it would be great if we could develop a reentry program to contract with DOC and provide support.: Saloni suggested MOCJ as a way to connect

- **Did this happen?** Ronald is not present and we don't have a MOCJ rep, but were able to ask Valerie. Yes! DOC recognizes the value of these tailored programs. City received new funding, so will be setting aside some funding for this purpose. In the works. Actively working, timeline is very unknown – when there is more specifics than a call for CBOs etc will be put out

### Wigs/Razors:

- The directives re: access to razors at RMSC and in various units within RMSC (**4008R-A, Distribution and Control of Razors**); directives re: wigs at RMSC vs other facilities; names of who they consult with on policies, both internal and external
- **May 2023 Munsky tells us no update on getting these policies to the TF, how about now?** Razors: people not having access in mental health areas. This should be resolved. People in mental health areas having daily access, if there are ongoing issues let Chelsea know. Will not share the directive to us through this forum.
  - **May 2023 Rachel offered to work with Munsky and Chelsea on connecting to people in NJ and OR – has this happened?** Rachel shared, they have no other information.
- **May 2023 Rachel shared the TLC spreadsheet of prison policies – has DOC looked at it?** Rachel shared, they have no other information.
- **Can a DOC representative walk us through razor access in different situations?**
  - **Anyone in GP at RMSC**
  - **Anyone in mental health observation at RMSC?**
  - **Anyone in PC at RMSC?**
  - **Anyone in GP at a men's jail**
  - **Anyone in mental health observation at a men's jail?**
  - **Anyone in PC at a men's jail?**
  - access to razors in all areas is on a daily basis, some people in mental health unit may be more closely monitored or have a modification if they have initiated self-harm using a razor. Should not be modification as a blanket policy, only for self-harm with razor.
    - How is the modification in place for mental health? Not sure, should be specific to people with self-harm histories. But DOC does not have policy on them.
- **WIGS:** In May 2023 we were told that there was no progress with internal conversations on wigs with the Chief of Security. **Has there been any movement since?** Chelsea says that there are no updates they have made their position very clear.

## CHS and Housing:

In June 2023 CHS stated that housing was not considered to be a clinical decision. Mik and Deb shared resources from other medical orgs who have weighed in that housing is aligned with clinical determinations.

- **Has CHS changed its stance here? Will CHS be including recommendations for housing?** The resource shared was the 2018 AMA recommendations, CHS believes that what they do now and the sensitivity to the clinical needs of transgender patients is supportive of this, but maintain that gender aligned housing should be DOC because practitioners should not medicalize gender identity.
  - **What does medicalize mean?** Doesn't want to misspeak as to how clinical staff understand it. Discussion of gender dysphoria and whether you need a diagnosis to receive that, staff doesn't want to have to rely on that diagnosis to provide necessary care
    - **Nicole says she will follow-up to make sure she is presenting the information correctly on behalf of clinicians.** Mik, Faris, Natalie, say yes please do. Natalie mentions that the CHS notes on medical care needs do so much to help compel moves to appropriate housing i.e. documenting heat sensitivity, asthma, etc, helps to advocate for certain style/type of housing because CHS recommends it to assist with medical needs.

## Law Library Forms:

**Any updates on getting 4498R-A into the LL?**

- **Can we see the policy to not put DOC Directives in the law library? Where does that live?**
- **What made DOC change the 2014 policy to the 2019 policy changing where the SCU forms are held? It went from delineated places to no specifics – why?**
- Purpose of law libraries is for legal documents only. Broadly it has always been the policy of DOC to not include their own Directives, but never had a policy where this is written down. This came up in a broader conversation to make the SCU more available: this has been addressed through other routes, and it's not the function of the law library to hold these documents. On the tablet you can indicate that you want the application for the SCU, want to talk to someone, etc. Also available at the intake process, those staff can come and meet with you directly and they tour the facilities regularly. That information is much more available. Better built in infrastructure to support, described the form in LL as "feeling it out in the void".
  - But in upstate facilities Kandra points out that administrative law, directives of a department, are in the law libraries, also Cook County etc.

- What if you don't have a tablet? Hotline #1010, also should be able to ask any staff, program staff, PREA staff,

#### Private Interviews with People on Housing:

- Deb suggests attorney/client meeting space as a place where this can happen: Chelsea says this is something that they can take into consideration as they review forms.
  - DOC acknowledges the jail infrastructure is out of date, they know there are many unmet needs. Try to avoid prescriptively assigning the atty/client rooms because attys need them for meeting with client. Atty/client meetings must be prioritized.
  - Sometimes the quickest way is in the housing area – scheduling it relies on escort, etc. counselors and Social Workers on unit already have these convos privately in unit, on the floor, and know how to do this.

#### New Jails:

In April 2023 Nicole shared that a CHS goal would be people being able to walk to appointments, not be escorted in the new jails. **Any updates on this? I.E. Has it been presented? What was the response?**

- Staffing plans for the BBJs are still being developed. Will still need a DOC escort but won't always have to travel to a clinic. Every floor of the Brooklyn jail will have a "cluster space" with an exam room – escorts bring to cluster, and then the providers can meet them there. Main clinic in the Brooklyn jail, and then each floor has a cluster space where both DOC programming can happen and an exam room. So will have privacy and some medical but also a main clinic.

- Kandra Note: When touring Norway prisons with Mayor's office and DOC, noticed movement and technology with keycards/bracelets so no need for all the escorts. Really think about this as we write the report. Less chance of missing medical appointments due to being able to self-access.

#### New Directive:

In April 2023 we asked for a timeline on directive "no updates. We are reviewing it now and will share it once it's been finalized. No timeline yet." **How about now?**

- That is still where it is.

#### LGBTQ Folder on the Tablet:

**In March 2023 we learned the contents of the table: (1) resource guide (2) therapeutic activities. But just the re-entry resource guide is on the tablet as of March 2023, the "therapeutic activity" writing prompts haven't gone on yet because they need to be viewed for triggers.** Have the therapeutic activity writing prompts been reviewed? Valerie thinks more has been added and will get back to us.

- **When was the resource guide last updated?** Available on the reentry section of DOC website and will share: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/doc/inmate-info/jail-release-services.page> no information on last update
- **Prior to the last Report hearing there was a discussion about having a one-pager in the LGBTQ folder to inform people inside of the hearing and remind them how to contact BOC or the city council to submit comments. That did not happen. Is DOC open to discussing this before the next hearing?** DOC will need to discuss internally, not the normal routine before a hearing. Mik asked for updates as discussed.