



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION
Cynthia Brann, Commissioner

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March 18, 2020

Jacqueline Sherman, Interim Chair
NYC Board of Correction
1 Centre Street, Room 2213
New York, NY 10007

Dear Interim Chair Sherman,

Thank you for your letter and its expression of support for our agencies as we continue our tireless efforts to respond to this public health emergency and prepare for various contingencies in order to protect the health and safety of all people in Department custody and Correctional Health Services' care. Our agencies are working urgently and diligently as partners in collaboration with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), the Office of Emergency Management, NYC Health + Hospitals, and City Hall. We assure you that we are following the guidance and recommendations of the City's public health and emergency management experts in this public health emergency.

As our agencies' leadership and experts discussed with Board Members during a conference call Monday, March 9th, and as we jointly presented publicly at the Board meeting last Tuesday, March 10th, we have already taken a number of actions intended to address COVID-19 within DOC facilities. DOC's actions include, in part, modifying sanitizing practices per CDC guidelines and ensuring staff and work details are trained on the new practices; ensuring screening procedures for individuals entering DOC custody are robust; ensuring individuals in custody have access to up-to-date information; and maintaining an adequate and stable supply of sanitizing equipment and materials. We additionally provided notification to Executive Director Egan regarding the visitor screening process that was implemented on Thursday, March 12 by order of the State Commission of Correction. We ensured detailed information on this process was posted on the DOC website for the public as well. CHS' actions include, in part, screening patients at pre-arraignment and upon admission to the jail system; expanding the use of the Communicable Disease Unit to isolate and monitor individuals as appropriate; securing the ability to test our patients as indicated; and coordinating with the NYC Health + Hospitals acute care system, which is among the best equipped in the nation to provide the appropriate and safe care to individuals who contract this disease. DOC and CHS also continue to work closely together as our understanding of this novel virus increases, to prepare for various and likely circumstances as the situation intensifies.


The Department and CHS will provide Board staff information as requested and as relevant to their oversight responsibilities to the extent possible, including ensuring that the Board, people in custody, and the public are notified of any additional developments pertaining to the rapidly evolving public health situation and their impacts on our agencies' operations. The Department additionally published an overview of DOC's COVID-19 Action Plan on the Department's website ([DOC COVID-19 Plan](#)).

Again, we very much appreciate the Board's understanding of our agencies' most urgent imperatives and needs. We understand the seriousness of the situation and the vulnerabilities of the population in our care. We are committing all available resources to this effort. Accordingly, we ask for the Board's continued understanding as we prioritize our focus on our operational needs in order to keep all people in Department custody and all people who work in Department facilities safe.

Sincerely,



Cynthia Brann
Commissioner, NYC DOC



Patricia Yang, DrPH
Senior Vice President, CHS

cc: Margaret Egan, Executive Director