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June 28, 2022

Amanda Masters
Executive Director
NYC Board of Correction
2 Lafayette, Suite 1221
New York, NY 10007

Dear Ms. Masters:

In accordance with the Board of Correction's New York City Correctional Health Care Minimum Standards, Section 3-13, "Variances," the Correctional Health Services (CHS) division of the NYC Health + Hospitals requests renewal, for a 6-month period, of a continuing variance from Section 3-04(b)(2)(v)(a) of the Minimum Standards, which requires that a tuberculin skin test (TST) be administered during the intake screening process for patients who do not have a prior history of a positive reaction to the test. The variance, first granted by the Board in July 2013 and applicable to patients throughout the NYC correctional system, authorizes CHS to use either interferon gamma release assays (IGRA) or TST for tuberculosis screening, and to exempt from repeat screening those persons who have a documented negative test in the six months prior to their admission.

The tuberculosis screening program began at the RMSC in 2011 and then at facilities housing male patients in 2012. Since implementation of the program twelve years ago, we have observed that the use of IGRAs at intake adds negligible additional time to the intake process and obviates the need for a follow-up encounter solely to obtain TST results. CHS has now had many years of experience with IGRA, which has proven to be a valuable and effective tool in controlling tuberculosis in the jail system. IGRA has become the preferred method of testing for latent tuberculosis as recommended by a 2017 guideline jointly issued by The American Thoracic Society, Infectious Diseases Society of America and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.¹

The consideration of the Board members and staff is greatly appreciated in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ross MacDonald".

Ross MacDonald, MD
Correctional Health Services

cc: Patsy Yang, DrPH

1. Lewinsohn DM et al. Official American Thoracic Society/Infectious Diseases Society of America/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Clinical Practice Guidelines: Diagnosis of Tuberculosis in Adults and Children. Clin Infect Dis. 2017 Jan 15;64(2):111-115.