



**New York City
Board of Correction
March 10, 2026
Public Meeting Minutes**

Attendees:

Members Present

Dwayne Sampson, Chair (virtual)¹
Helen Skipper, Vice Chair
Hon. Barry A. Cozier (Ret.), Member
Felipe Franco, Member
Dr. Lauren Stossel, Member
Jude Torchenaud, Member

Department of Correction (DOC)

Meg Egan, First Deputy Commissioner
James Conroy, Deputy Commissioner of Legal Matters/General Counsel
James Boyd, Deputy Commissioner of Strategic Operations
Patrick Gallahue, Deputy Commissioner of Public Information
Kathleen Zadzora, Assistant Commissioner of Health Affairs
Kyle Archie, Assistant Commissioner of Operations Research
Alex Maldonado, Assistant Commissioner for Strategic Initiatives
Nadia Jean-Francois, Executive Director of Intergovernmental Affairs and
Special Projects
Tamia Brown, Executive Director of Visit Operations
Mark Pauley, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs and Strategic Partnerships
Chelsea Chard, Senior Advisor

¹ Chair Sampson was out of the country and therefore unable to reach the meeting location.

NYC Health + Hospitals - Correctional Health Services (CHS)

Patsy Yang, Dr. PH, Senior Vice President

Jeanette Merrill, Senior Assistant Vice President of Communications and External Affairs

Carlos Castellanos, Chief Operations Officer/Deputy Executive Director

Nancy Arias, RN, Chief Nursing Officer/Deputy Executive Director

Zachary Rosner, Chief of Medical Service

Joseph Otonichar – Chief of Service, Mental Health

Nicole Levy, Director of Communications and Intergovernmental Affairs

Others in Attendance

Nathaniel Evans, OPA

Abdullah Mohiuddin, MOCJ

Cassidy Burry, Freedom Agenda

Anna Senft, UJC

Kyriaki Vetoulis-Acevedo, UJC

Jennifer Parish, UJC

Chris Boyle, NYCDS

Casey Dalporto, NYCDS

Michael Klinger, Brooklyn Defenders

Chaplain Dr. Victoria A. Phillips, Visionary V Ministries and JAC

Craig Rothfeld

Isabella Gallo

America Canas

Riley Doyle Evans, Legal Aid

Tarini Garimella, Osborne

Natalie Fiorenzo, NYCDS

Ryan Acquattro, Freedom Agenda

Approval of March 10, 2026 meeting agenda

Chair Sampson attended this meeting remotely. Upon being moved and seconded, the March 10, 2026 meeting agenda was unanimously approved.

[See this portion of the video here.](#)

Approval of the February 10, 2026 public meeting minutes

Upon being moved and seconded, the February 10, 2026 minutes were unanimously approved. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Public comment period – People in Custody

Four comments from people in custody were played. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

First Deputy Commissioner Margaret Egan’s Welcome

Chair Sampson offered welcoming remarks to Margaret Egan, the Department’s newly appointed First Deputy Commissioner, emphasizing his excitement at the opportunity for a collaborative relationship between the Board and the Department. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Executive Director update

Executive Director Georges-Yilla shared updates from Board staff regarding the census, monitoring, and reporting.

As of March 9, 2026, the approximate total census of people in custody was 6,797. As of January 12, the census numbers by facility were as follows: BHPW (67), EHPW (11), EMTC (1,397), GRVC (886), NIC (314), OBCC (1,410), RESH-ESH (107), RESH non-ESH (446), RMSC (434), RNDC (1,035), and WF (689). [See this portion of the video here.](#)

The Board received 224 complaints in February, with the largest share coming from OBCC (31%). The most common issues raised involved medical health care (13%), visit appeals (8%), and environmental health conditions (8%). Overall, the complaints reflect ongoing concerns about access to health care, visitation, facility conditions, and basic services within housing units. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Executive Director Georges-Yilla then provided a brief update regarding BOC’s oversight of compliance with certain Minimum Standards. Regarding permissible items, BOC staff’s review found that individual facilities maintain separate conflicting permissible items lists. The Board has shared its findings

and recommendations with the Department. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Regarding de-escalation units, while investigating an incident at OBCC in January, BOC's Special Investigations team found that a person in custody was held in an OBCC intake holding pen for more than 24 hours after the incident for de-escalation purposes, without bedding or linens. Further in-person observations revealed that correctional staff at OBCC, GRVC, RMSC, RNDC, West Facility, and NIC are placing individuals in intake holding pens immediately following incidents for de-escalation purposes. Executive Director Georges-Yilla stated that it is critical that DOC take immediate steps to comply with the de-escalation confinement standards so that people in custody are held in appropriate housing areas with access to basic necessities following incidents. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Board presentation on injury response

Research and Compliance Associate Claire Loredan presented findings and recommendations from the Board's report on injury responses in NYC jails. This assessment of DOC and CHS's implementation of Minimum Standard §3-16 revealed important progress alongside persistent gaps that limit the effectiveness of injury response, investigation, coordination, and reporting in NYC jails.

While both agencies maintain foundational policies and conduct investigations in compliance with basic requirements, the absence of clear timelines, inconsistent data reconciliation, and incomplete reporting hinder transparency and oversight. The lack of a coordinated injury tracking system and ongoing delays in submitting comprehensive reports reduce the ability to identify trends and implement timely preventive measures.

Addressing these challenges through strengthened policies, improved data integration, and enhanced accountability mechanisms is essential to fulfill the intent of the Minimum Standards and safeguard the health and safety of people in custody. Sustained commitment to these improvements will better

position DOC and CHS to identify and prevent injuries, ensure more timely and objective investigations, and ultimately promote safer conditions within NYC's correctional facilities. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

First Deputy Commissioner opening remarks

First Deputy Commissioner Egan stated that Commissioner Richards sends his regrets for having to miss this meeting, but he will attend Board meetings moving forward. First Deputy Commissioner Egan shared this new administration's vision for the Department and its partnership with the Board, emphasizing safety, collaboration, and transparency. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Department update on permissible items and visits

Regarding permissible items, Executive Director of Intergovernmental Affairs Nadia Jean-Francois acknowledged that some confusion has arisen regarding the current permissible items list, but the Department is currently undergoing a review of the list to ensure it is clear, accurate, and consistent agency-wide. The Department anticipates finalizing the list and disseminating it widely by the end of next month. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Board Member Stossel asked why thermals cannot be sent through the mail. Additionally, Board Member Stossel asked about mailing contact lenses and other medically urgent needs. Vice Chair Skipper asked about items being shipped directly from manufacturers to avoid the Department's concerns regarding tampering. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Regarding visits, Deputy Commissioner of Strategic Operations James Boyd gave a presentation of the digital Attorney Visit Scheduler pilot that will be launched in the coming weeks. Deputy Commissioner Boyd stated that the Department is also live tracking family visits to better monitor the stages of the visiting process for loved ones. A guide for loved ones visiting Rikers Island will also be coming soon. Deputy Commissioner Boyd also stated that the new Executive Director of Visit Operations Tamia Brown was onboarded, and

present in the audience, and would also reconvene the Visits Working Group. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Board Member Stossel asked about the family visits live monitor and next steps for advancing tracking and scheduling tools. Chair Sampson asked if the Department will be soliciting feedback from attorneys. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Department update on de-escalation units

General Counsel James Conroy stated that intake areas should not be utilized as de-escalation spaces as per Department directives and policy. The Department is investigating the incidents the Board brought to the Department's attention. General Counsel Conroy stated that the only designated de-escalation unit is located at EMTC. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Board Member Stossel asked about Departmental policy and directives regarding de-escalation in facilities other than EMTC. Board Member Stossel also asked about touring and tracking de-escalation spaces. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Department response to injury response report

Assistant Commissioner Kathleen Zadzora provided a response to the Board's injury response report, stating that while the Department has concerns with the scope and methodology, the Department is supportive of the spirit of the report. [See this portion of the video.](#)

Board Member Stossel asked about Departmental efforts to build trust with people in custody because people in custody overwhelmingly do not participate in injury investigations. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Department update on outposted therapeutic units

Assistant Commissioner for Strategic Initiatives Alex Maldonado provided a status update on opening the OTxHU at Bellevue Hospital. Assistant Commissioner Maldonado stated that staffing remains the largest hurdle to

opening the facility, emphasizing that the Department will share more specific information once a clear timeline is finalized. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Vice Chair Skipper asked for a more specific timeframe for opening the facility. Board Member Stossel asked about the staffing requirements. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

CHS response to injury response report

Chief of Medical Service Zachary Rosner and Chief of Mental Health Services Joseph Otonichar discussed CHS' injury reporting systems and services. Chief Rosner and Chief Otonichar also discussed the nuanced differences between self-injurious behavior and self-harm in reporting tables. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Board Members Stossel and Torchenaud asked for additional clarification between the difference between self-injurious behavior and self-harm. Chair Sampson asked if CHS and/or DOC could discuss the contents of their quarterly meetings. The Department and CHS were not able to formulate a response. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

CHS update on De-escalation confinement

Chief Operations Officer Carlos Castellanos stated CHS' policies and protocols regarding de-escalation situations. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

CHS update on STEP (Supportive Transitional Engagement Program)

Chief of Mental Health Services Joseph Otonichar gave a presentation on CHS' new initiative STEP. Along CHS' continuum of care, STEP helps patients who do not, or no longer, require the full clinical support of a mental observation unit to maintain clinic gains. Therefore, STEP is an intermediate level of care between general population and mental observation. In order to support this initiative, the number of total mental observation beds decreases slightly in order to be converted into STEP beds. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Vice Chair Skipper asked about staffing and resources changes, tying her question to staffing allocations at OTxHU Bellevue. CHS then stated that CHS is fully staffed for the soon-to-open Bellevue unit. Board Member Stossel asked about the clinical differences between mental observation and STEP units and in which units/facilities these STEP units will be housed. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Public Comment

The Board heard in-person public comments from Dr. Victoria A. Phillips, Riley Doyle Evans, Natalie Fiorenzo, Michael Klinger, Anna Senft, and Kyriaki Vetoulis-Acevedo.

The Board then heard virtual public comments from Mary Lynne Werlwas and Emily Joyce.

The Board's next meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, May 12, 2026 at 1:00pm. [See this portion of the video here.](#)