

First Deputy Commissioner
Westchester County Department of Correction
Testimony

Good morning my name is Louis Molina. I serve as the First Deputy Commissioner for the Westchester County Department of Correction.

My colleague briefly walked you through how we as a Department successfully implemented and ensured that we had a PREA process that achieved DOJ PREA Jail Standards, and created a robust atmosphere that prevents, detects and responds to sexual abuse and sexual assault of our vulnerable population.

In closing I wanted to just take two minutes to touch on why we are successful with PREA certification.

We are able to achieve this because we have created an evidence-based ecosystem that ensures that our most vital asset - our workforce - has support via training. There is regular direct supervision from first-line supervisors all the way up the Chain of Command, coupled with our strategic nonprofit and vendor partnerships that work daily with our staff on the impact of adverse childhood experiences, secondary trauma and the importance of why our custodial clients need to be encouraged to stay connected with their loved ones and to foster a positive visits between their family and friends we do not conduct strip-searches before visits of persons in our custody or visitors. This ensures that we have a secure and safe rehabilitative environment that maintain a person dignity.

PREA Compliance is one of our many accomplishments. We are also certified by the American Correctional Association and the National Commission on Correctional Health Care, which means we voluntarily operate at the highest standards and best practices in Corrections.

I share this with the Board because, while the topic today is PREA, PREA Compliance is but one of many vital standards, along with other programmatic best processes that allow the staff, custodial clients and partners to work and reside in a safe and secure rehabilitative environment.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to add our voice to this important conversation.