



Kelly Grace Price • creator, Close Rosie's • 534 w 187<sup>th</sup> st #7 New York, NY 10033  
• E-Mail: [gorgeous212@gmail.com](mailto:gorgeous212@gmail.com)  
Web: <http://www.CloseRosies.org>

April 14, 2020

The New York City Board of Correction  
1 Centre Street  
Room 2213  
New York, N.Y. 10007

**Ref: Women on Rosie's and Covid-19:**

Dear Chair Jones Austin, Vice Chair Richards and; Members of the Board of Correction:

Thank you for holding this special meeting and allowing advocates to speak before voting on the faae of variances presented for your consideration by Correctional Health Services. I am Kelly Grace Price, founder of [www.CloseRosies.org](http://www.CloseRosies.org). I would like to address three topics today:

- I. Covid-19 Mercy Released from Rosie's on Rikers;**
- II. CHS Variance Request and;**
- III. Commissioner Brann: its time to draw the line in the sand.**

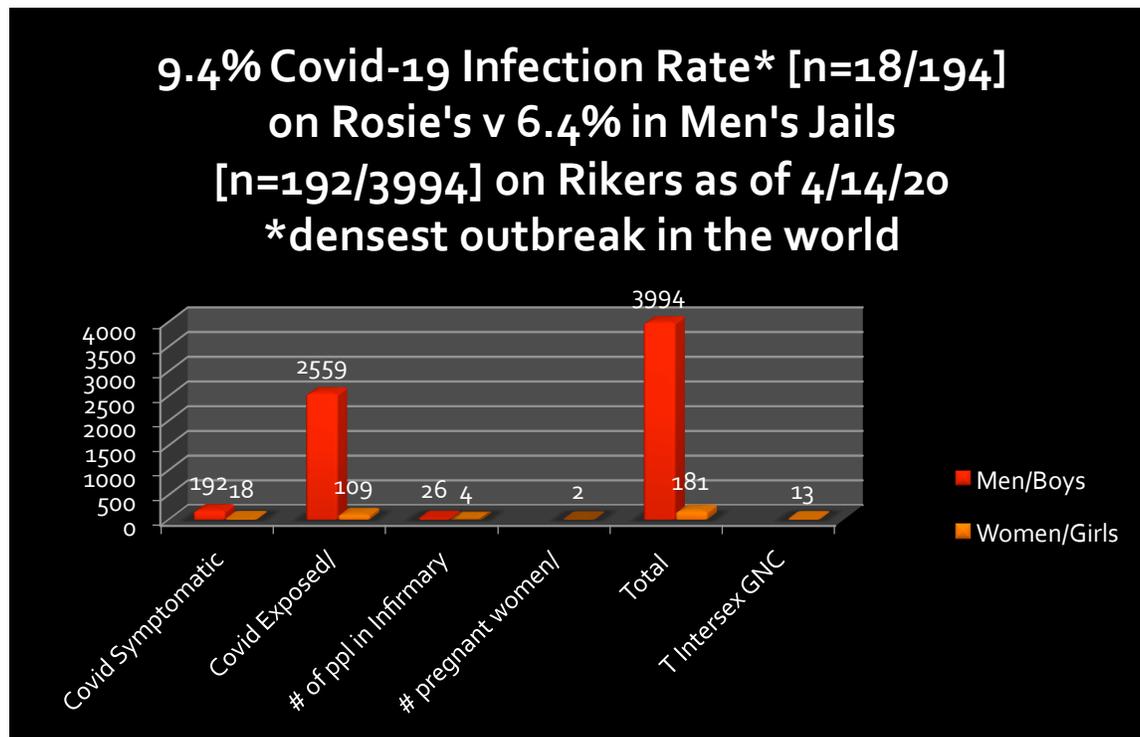
**I. Covid-19 Mercy Released from Rosie's on Rikers:** NYC Board of Correction's (BOC) Data<sup>1</sup> and NYC Open data as of Tuesday April 14, 2020 reveal there are 181 women/girls and 13 trans, intersex and gender non-conforming people housed at the Rose M. Singer (RMSC aka "Rosie's") in custody at the New York City Department of Correction (DOC) on Rikers Island facility: two of these people are pregnant; four housed in the infirmary; eighteen women/girls are symptomatic for Covid-19 and; 109 women/girls have been exposed but asymptomatic. **This data is representative of a 71%**

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/boc/downloads/pdf/Meetings/2020/April/Board of Correction Daily Public Report 4 13 2020 final.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/boc/downloads/pdf/Meetings/2020/April/Board%20of%20Correction%20Daily%20Public%20Report%204%2013%202020%20final.pdf)

**[n=137/194] exposure-rate at Rosie's and a 9.4% [n=18/194] infection rate: literally the densest in the world.**<sup>2</sup>

This number is likely higher in actuality as it is exclusive of infected/exposed corrections professionals, support staff and medical/mental health staff that are/have been posted to work on Rosie's. The infection rate for men/boys on Rikers is 4.8% [n=192/3,994] and the exposure rate is 64% [n=2,559/3,994] Why this >30% chasm in infection rates along gender lines? What could possibly account for it?



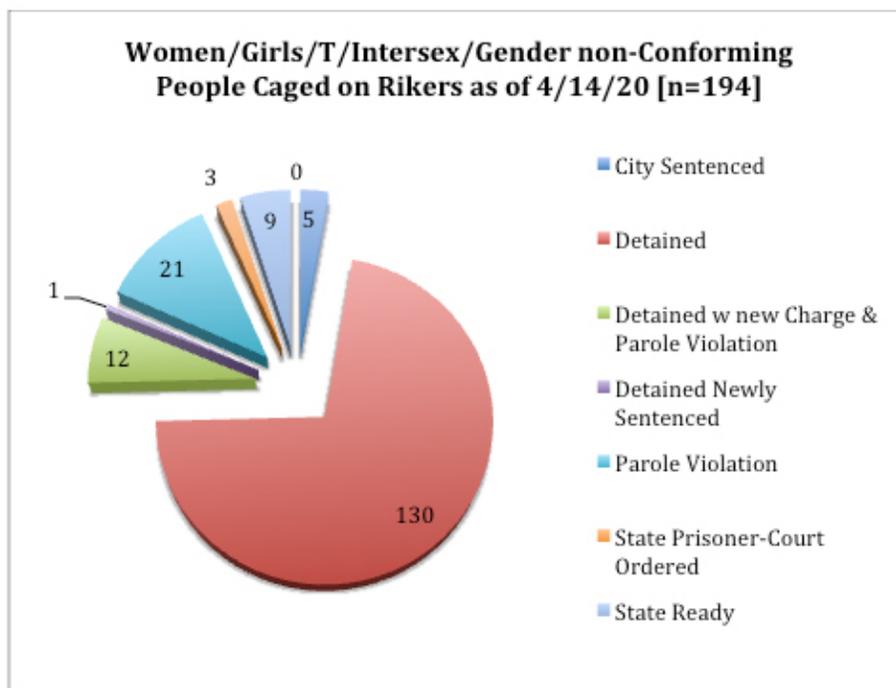
Medical professionals<sup>3</sup> and the BOC itself<sup>4</sup> have called for the release of all people >50, vulnerable to the virus because of pre-existing conditions; detained on technical parole violations, and all City-sentenced people with less than a year left to serve of their sentence(s). The Board's independence

<sup>2</sup> Based on the Legal Aid Society's data as of April 13, 2020 calculating the overall infection rate for the jails on Rikers Island to be 7.80% or 77.96 infections per 1,000 people. The Legal Aid Society: **COVID-19 Infection Tracking in NYC Jails**: <https://legalaidnyc.org/covid-19-infection-tracking-in-nyc-jails/>

<sup>3</sup> Top doctor at Rikers Island calls the jail a 'public health disaster unfolding before our eyes': **The Washington Post**: [Meagan Flynn](https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/03/31/rikers-island-coronavirus-spread/) March 31, 2020 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/03/31/rikers-island-coronavirus-spread/>

<sup>4</sup> **NEW YORK CITY BOARD OF CORRECTION CALLS FOR CITY TO BEGIN RELEASING PEOPLE FROM JAIL AS PART OF PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE TO COVID-19**: [https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/boc/downloads/pdf/News/covid-19/2020.03.17-Board of Correction Statement re Release.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/boc/downloads/pdf/News/covid-19/2020.03.17-Board%20of%20Correction%20Statement%20re%20Release.pdf)

and stewardship of the calls for mercy releases is deeply appreciated. I am sure that the board is well aware that as of today at the RMSC twenty-one women/girls are being held on parole violations; twelve on parole violations + new charges; five people are held on City sentences of less than one year; nine are sentenced and "state-ready".<sup>5</sup>



- **Mothers:** we know that 80% (four out of five) women behind bars in the US are mothers<sup>6</sup> and I urge that the BOC advocate for all mothers be released to be home with their children;
- **People held on technical parole violations are still at Rosie's and on Rikers** regardless of specific calls to evacuate people in this category caged in our City jails. This delay has resulted in at least two deaths.<sup>7,8</sup>
  - There are still 33 women/girls on Rosie's on parole violations: 21 are held on technical parole violations and 12 on new charges + parole violations. Among the charges alleged in the latter category are petit larceny and contempt of court: both class "A" misdemeanors.

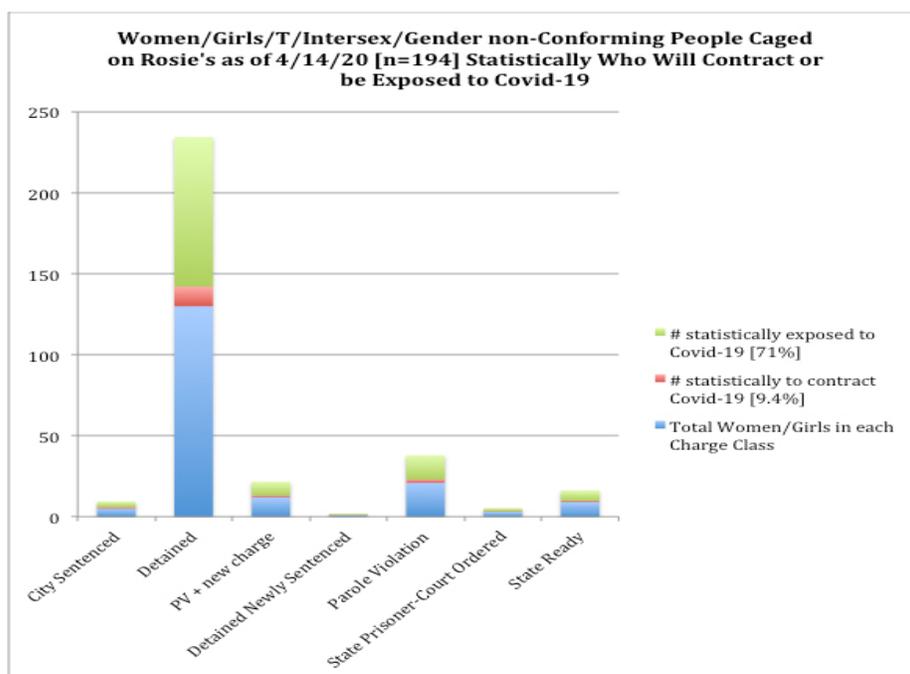
<sup>5</sup> NYC Open Data: <https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Public-Safety/Daily-Inmates-In-Custody/7479-ugqb>

<sup>6</sup> "80% of the women who will go to jail this year are mothers – including nearly 150,000 women who are pregnant when they are admitted." **Prison Policy Initiative Blog**: Linked 4/14/20: <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2018/05/13/mothers-day-2018/>

<sup>7</sup> Jailed on a Minor Parole Violation, He Caught the Virus and Died: **The New York Times**: Jan Ransom: April 9, 2020: linked April 14, 2020 <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/09/nyregion/rikers-coronavirus-deaths-parolees.html>

<sup>8</sup> Second Rikers Island Inmate Dies of COVID-19 After Failed Bid to Spring Him: **The City**: Reuven Blau: April 13, 2020: <https://thecity.nyc/2020/04/second-rikers-inmate-dies-of-covid-after-freedom-bid-fails.html>

- 23 out of 33 [71%] of women/girls/trans/intersex and gender non-conforming people held on parole-related charges on Rosie's statistically have been exposed to the corona virus and 3.1 [9.4%] of people caged on Rosie's will/have contract(ed) Covid-19.
- Since March 27, 2020, when Governor Cuomo called on all persons held on technical parole violations to be released<sup>9</sup> from New York prisons and jails only eleven women, girls, trans, intersex and gender non-conforming people held on parole violations have been released from Rosie's on Rikers.



**II. CHS Variance Request:** I need to express concern (acknowledging the wonderful work that doctors such as Rachel Bedard, Ross MacDonald et al are doing) regarding this portion of the CHS variance request just submitted to the BOC and specifically this paragraph:

"Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment Standards

1. Section 5-10(d), which requires rape crisis intervention and counseling services to be offered and delivered to inmates in the facility in which they are housed by qualified victim advocates. CHS will continue to take reports from patients and communicate such information to the Department of Correction's Investigation Division, but in an effort to minimize staff-patient contact, as discussed below, we

<sup>9</sup> "We're releasing people who are in jails because they violated parole for non-serious reasons...and wherever we can get people out of jails, out of prisons, now, we are." Governor Andrew Cuomo, **MSNBC**: All In with Chris Hayes: March 27, 2020: <http://www.msnbc.com/transcripts/all-in/2020-03-27>

request the flexibility to limit encounters with victim advocates. Victims of sexual assault will continue to have access to medical and/mental health staff with regard to these issues."

1. What does this mean exactly? Does it mean that victim advocates (SAART, SAVI, et al) will not be allowed when survivors of sexual assault, abuse and harassment are reporting to CHS or when interviewed by DOI ID? Please can you seek clarity on what this means exactly?

2. We don't have data from CHS/DOC detailing the number of advocate interactions with CHS/DOC present since PREA implementation in January of 2017. We've never received this data. All we know is the number of people who reported sexual abuse who had a SSA encounter: but we don't know how many of these involved triangulating with CHS and/or DOC ID or Captains investigating or following-up on complaints. For instance, The CHS Sexual Abuse Advocacy 2019 Annual Report<sup>10</sup> highlighted that from June 1st 2018 - May 31 2019, 506 of the 634 (80%) patients who reported sexual abuse in the jails had a corresponding SAA encounter. But this is the only data we have. We don't know how many of these 506 encounters occurred with a CHS or DOI professional present as well. Is it the intention of the variance to keep all SAAs off of Rikers completely? Why haven't tele-health options been offered in lieu of direct contact?

**III. Commissioner Brann:** I acknowledge the steps DOC<sup>11</sup> has already taken to begin to plan and respond to the threat of the Covid-19 virus but we must do better. Commissioner Brann's judgment has never been called into question in sharper focus. Why did she allow a ~250 person gathering<sup>12</sup> at RNDC on 3/16/20 to celebrate CO Clarke's 20-yr 'last call' retirement party. Now Rikers is the worldwide epicenter of Covid-19 outbreak.

If there ever was proof that Commissioner Brann doesn't have control of her staff and needs to be sacked this is it. Why was this event allowed? The week before the state went on lockdown and all

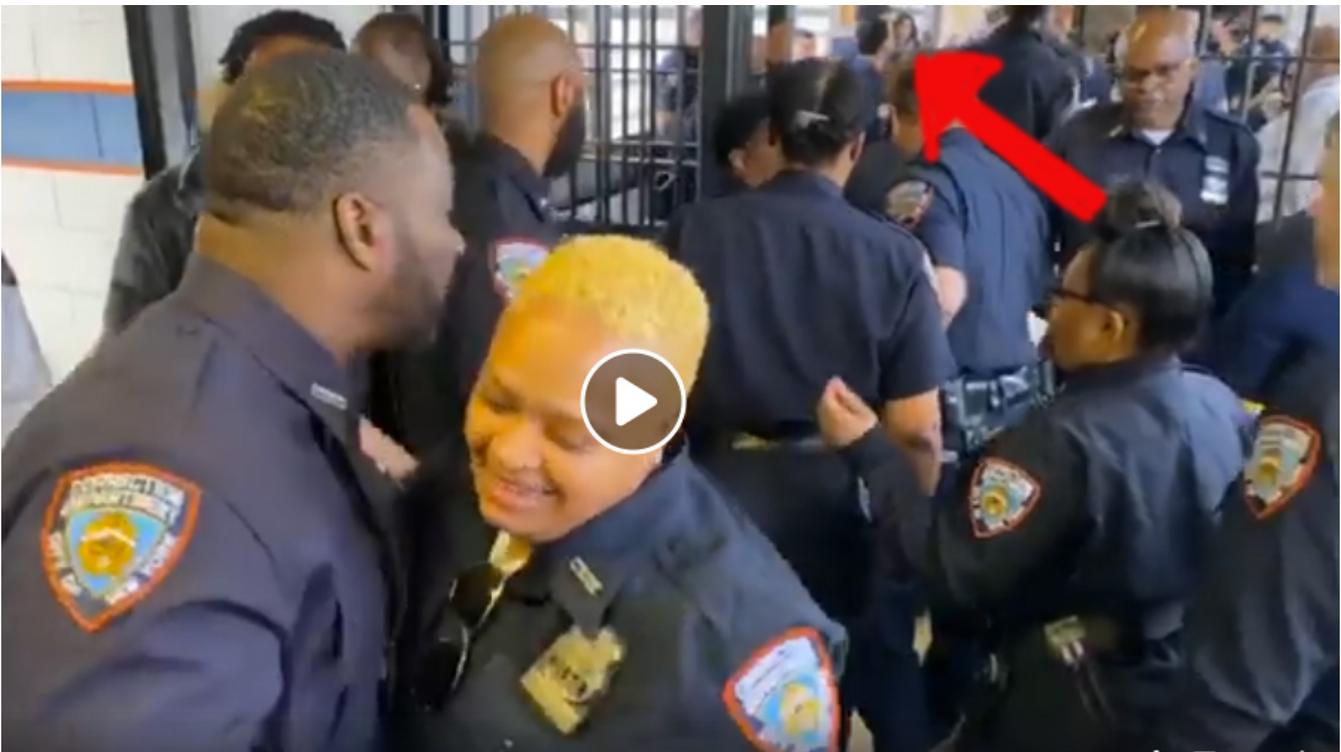
<sup>10</sup> Sexual Abuse Advocacy (SAA) 2019 Annual Report NYC Corrections Health Services: [https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/boc/downloads/pdf/Jail-Regulations/BOC\\_SAA\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2019.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/boc/downloads/pdf/Jail-Regulations/BOC_SAA_Annual_Report_2019.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> **New York City Department of Correction: COVID-19 Preparation & Action Plan:** linked April 14, 2020: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doc/media/coronavirus-news.page>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/ray.rivera.186/videos/10214066283805172/>

events were cancelled, Governor Cuomo called to limit social events and for people to stay home from work. The video is FILLED with captains and top brass all in attendance (white shirts). The only PPE around is on the food server's hands. NO masks, no social distancing, and no gloves: just hugs, kissing, cake, dancing, and a conga line.

Commissioner Brann's presence at the event is not the issue (although sources say she did attend). On March 16, 2020 Courtney Gross broke the news<sup>33</sup> that the first DOC employee, had died from Covid-19. Why was this event allowed? If Commissioner Brann didn't know about it isn't this a further indictment of her lack of control of her own department? How many people who attended this party have contracted Covid-19? How many have died? I know the board has the power to investigate and I hope it does.



---

<sup>33</sup> NYC Correction Investigator Dies of Coronavirus: **Spectrum NY1 News**: Courtney Gross: March 16, 2020: <https://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/coronavirus-blog/2020/03/16/nyc-correction-employee-dies-of-coronavirus>



**Kelly Grace Price,**  
**Ft. George, New York**  
**April 14, 2020**