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Margaret Egan
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March 3, 2020

Cynthia Brann
Commissioner
NYC Department of Correction
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Patricia Yang, DrPH
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Correctional Health Services
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Dear Commissioner Brann and Senior Vice President Yang:

The Board of Correction (BOC) appreciates that your agencies will brief the Board at its March 10, 2020 public meeting about your respective efforts to prevent the transmission of the Coronavirus disease 2019 (“COVID-19”) in DOC facilities. Now that COVID-19 has spread to the United States, including New York, the Board requests that each agency provide BOC with its written plan for managing COVID-19 in the NYC jails in advance of the March public meeting, i.e., by Friday, March 6. Your plan should respond to the following questions:

1. What steps are the Department of Correction (DOC)/Correctional Health Services (CHS) taking to prevent transmission of COVID-19 in DOC facilities?
2. How will CHS integrate its COVID-19 surveillance into the overall Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) epidemiologic management of the coronavirus?
3. BOC Minimum Standard 3-02(g) governs Medical Isolation in the jails. How will DOC/CHS address quarantine/isolation and separation issues when they arise?
 - (a) Where will DOC/CHS quarantine/isolate suspected or diagnosed cases of COVID-19?
 - (b) How will DOC/CHS ensure access to Minimum Standards for people in quarantine?
 - (c) Will DOC/CHS be seeking any variances from the Board’s Minimum Standards for people in custody who are suspected of or diagnosed with COVID-19?
 - (d) How many quarantine beds are available? If the need exceeds the current quarantine bed capacity, where will DOC/CHS house people?

- (e) If quarantined/isolated, when will patients be able to return to general population or other jail housing areas?
 - (f) For people in restrictive housing, specialized mental health units or other specialized housing, how will DOC and CHS work together to ensure safe housing that minimizes risk of transmission?
4. What protective measures are in place for staff who must interact with people suspected or diagnosed with COVID-19, including medical and mental health staff, escort officers, and emergency response teams?
 5. What protective measures are in place for people who are at high risk for serious illness if they become infected, including pregnant women, people with compromised immune systems, and people with chronic illness?
 6. How will hospital admissions and stays be arranged?
 - (a) How will this arrangement affect operations at DOC hospital commands?
 7. How will DOC ensure that people in custody who are diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19 have access to the courts to adjudicate their cases? How will DOC ensure that people in custody who are not diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19 can continue to access the courts while minimizing risk of exposure to/from and at court?
 8. Will people in custody suspected of having or diagnosed with COVID-19 confined in the jails be able to leave after serving their sentence or when eligible for discharge (e.g., satisfied bail requirements, admitted to a non-detention program)?
 9. How will CHS/DOC communicate to their respective staff and visitors that they may have come into contact with people suspected of or diagnosed with COVID-19?
 - (a) What measures will CHS/DOC take with respect to staff and visitors who are suspected of or diagnosed with COVID-19?
 - (b) Under what circumstances would DOC seek a variance to suspend visits for the general population or those people in custody who are suspected of or diagnosed with COVID-19?
 - (c) BOC Minimum Standard 3-08(3)(ii)(B) requires CHS report to the Board anytime it discloses an individuals' communicable disease diagnosis to the Department. How does CHS intend to implement this new requirement?
 10. How will DOC/CHS communicate its preparations and ongoing efforts to staff, people in custody, and the public?

We look forward to receipt of your plan on March 6. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Margaret Egan.

Sincerely,



Jacqueline Sherman

cc: DOC
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Richard Bush
Heidi Grossman, Esq.
Hazel Jennings
Steven Kaiser
Dana Wax

CHS
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