

Meeting of the New York City  
Board of Correction

September 10, 1997

A G E N D A

1. Approval of July 9, 1997 BOC meeting minutes
2. Acting Chair's report
3. Members' reports
4. Staff report
5. Department of Correction requests for variances

NEW YORK CITY  
BOARD OF CORRECTION

July 9, 1997

MEMBERS PRESENT

John R. Horan, Acting Chair  
David Lenefsky  
Barbara Margolis

Excused absences were noted for Members Canute C. Bernard, M.D., Louis Cruz, Stanley Kreitman, Peter J. Johnson, Jr., and David A. Schulte.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

Michael Jacobson, Commissioner  
Tom Antenen, Deputy Commissioner  
Antonio Figueroa, Deputy Commissioner  
Roger Parris, Assistant Commissioner  
Edward Reilly, Bureau Chief  
Sheila Vaughan, Assistant Chief

HEALTH AND HOSPITALS CORPORATION

Audrey Compton, M.D., Acting Executive Director  
Andrew Harris, Associate Executive Director  
Michael Tannenbaum, Associate Executive Director  
Arthur Lynch, Director of Mental Health  
Linda Calzaretta, Director of Risk Management

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Amy Cooper, Newsday  
Melanie Signorile, Village Voice  
Dale Wilker, Legal Aid Society  
Milton Zelenmyer, Legal Aid Society

Acting Chair John R. Horan convened the meeting at 1:10 p.m. Those members present approved the minutes from the June 11, 1997 meeting, subject to approval via telephone poll of a quorum of the Members.

Acting Chair Horan asked for reports from the Members. Board Member David Lenefsky representatives from the Department of Correction for a response to his request at the June Board meeting regarding two issues: (1) more space at the Rose M. Singer Center (RMSC) to provide group mental health counseling sessions and (2) enhanced mental health training for the correctional staff. Commissioner Michael Jacobson responded as follows: (1) with respect to the space issue, the chapel will be made available to the mental health staff for group counseling and (2) the training issue is a system-wide problem. He stated that in the coming weeks, training will be available at the DOC Training Academy to provide base-line mental health training to officers who work in the Mental Observation Units or have regular contact with mentally ill inmates. In the next six months, the Department will institute a "train-the-captains" program to augment in the jails the training already being provided at the Academy. The Commissioner stated that this enhanced training program will begin at RMSC.

Acting Chair Horan asked about the status of contract negotiations between Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) and Montefiore and plans for providing medical services to inmates once the Montefiore contract expires. Correctional Health Services Acting Executive Director Audrey Compton, M.D. responded that HHC is undertaking two concurrent actions: (1) HHC is in negotiation with Montefiore to extend its contract to December 31, 1997 and (2) on June 18, 1997 HHC published its Request For Proposals (RFP) to provide medical services throughout the correctional system. Dr. Compton said that HHC is scheduled to select the vendor by August 25. She reported that the new vendor will begin sometime between November 1, 1997 and January 1, 1998. Dr. Compton added that 35 bidders attended the bidder's conference, but it is unclear how many will actually bid.

Mr. Lenefsky stated that he would imagine that some of the Montefiore staff would opt to leave, creating an unstable work situation during the transition. He asked how HHC will ensure the continuity of services between now and when the new vendor takes over. Dr. Compton responded that HHC will maintain continuity of care, but with great difficulty. She outlined a number of steps that HHC will be taking: greater visibility by CHS on Rikers Island; maintaining direct communications between HHC and the doctors on Rikers Island; and providing medical coverage for departing Montefiore staff, through a contract with Roosevelt Island Physicians Associates.

Deputy Executive Director Cathy Potler asked if HHC had contracted with Roosevelt Island Physicians Association for the specific purpose of providing staff for Rikers Island. Dr. Compton replied that HHC had an existing contractual relationship with Roosevelt Island Physicians Association. Commissioner Jacobson added that it is operating under a requirements contract.

Executive Director Richard Wolf asked how the physicians group recruits doctors for Rikers Island. Dr. Compton replied that it will advertise for doctors to work on Rikers Island and HHC will provide orientation to the doctors in the same way that orientation is conducted for Montefiore staff. Dr. Compton added that she hopes that arrangements can be made to enable the doctors to work under a long-term contract which will reduce turnover and the number of new per diem physicians.

Mr. Lenefsky asked if HHC is monitoring on a daily basis the number of inmates who are being treated. Dr. Compton responded that David Fletcher, an epidemiologist on Rikers Island, has joined HHC, and is in the process of developing statistical indicators to monitor services. She anticipates that this will be ready next week.

Member Barbara Margolis asked if the Roosevelt Island Physicians Association has ever worked in a correctional setting. Dr. Compton replied that it is her understanding that a few of the doctors in this group work as per diem physicians on Rikers



Island.

Ms. Potler asked who would replace Montefiore supervisory staff should they opt to leave prior to December 31<sup>st</sup>. Dr. Compton responded that the supervisory staff will be required to remain in place until December 31<sup>st</sup> under provisions of the contract that HHC is negotiating with Montefiore.

Mr. Lenefsky asked the Commissioner if there was anything that DOC staff could do to promote a smooth transition to a new provider. Mr. Jacobson replied that the Wardens and Central Office staff have been instructed to monitor the delivery of health services.

Both Mr. Lenefsky and Mr. Wolf expressed concerns that the "short-term" physicians from Roosevelt Island Physician Association be sufficiently prepared to work in correctional settings. Dr. Compton reiterated that after the Central Office orientation, these doctors will be supervised by the Chief Physician in the clinic and assisted on off-tours by the supervisory doctor covering the Island. She added that under the terms of the contract, Montefiore's supervisory physicians and staff will remain on Rikers Island through December 31<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Lenefsky stated that HHC has a very difficult job to do in a very short time and offered the Board's assistance.

Acting Chair Horan raised the issue of a recent suicide in the Contagious Disease Unit (CDU) on July 4, 1997. HHC's Director of Mental Health Arthur Lynch responded that the suicide is still under investigation. Mr. Lenefsky asked how is it possible that someone is able to hang himself when he is housed in a cell directly across from the nurses' station and officers' desk. Mr. Lynch replied that HHC is looking into this issue. Mr. Lynch added that while the cell is directly across from staff, it is difficult to see directly into the cell because of the angle. He added that just prior to the inmate's death, the nurse had answered questions from the inmate about his medications.

Ms. Potler stated that it was her understanding that the cells directly across from the nurses' station and officer post  
Acting Chair Horan requested an update on the plan to charge inmates for medical care. Commissioner Jacobson said that the objective of the plan is not to charge all inmates and is not to make money; he emphasized that the goal is to identify abusers of the health system and charge them. He said that DOC staff will be working with him to identify such persons.

Acting Chair Horan noted for the record that Board staff received from the Department an operations order on the use of the stun shield. Commissioner Jacobson stated that the stun shield has been "taken off-line" until the Department completes its review and issues a report of its findings. He added that based upon the findings in the report, a decision will be made as to its use.

Acting Chair Horan requested that the Department discuss the circumstances surrounding the recent escape from the George Motchan Detention Center. Commissioner Jacobson asked that discussion take place in Executive Session because of security