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**NYC BOARD OF CORRECTION VOTES TO END SOLITARY CONFINEMENT IN
CITY'S JAILS**

NEW YORK—Today, the New York City Board of Correction, an independent oversight board for the City's jail system, voted unanimously to end solitary confinement in the City's jails. With the new proposed disciplinary model, New York City will go further than any major jail system in the country in banning solitary confinement. The new rule is available [here](#).

"New York City is going further than any jail system in America to ban solitary confinement once and for all," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "Through our work with our Board of Correction, we have found a plan that will provide a safe and humane environment for those who are incarcerated and officers alike."

"This rule ends solitary confinement in the New York City jail system once and for all, replacing it with a system that balances the need for safety in the jail and the need to provide the care and support to address behaviors for all concerned. These reforms are necessary for a safer and more humane jail system, for people in custody and staff," said **Board of Correction Chair and CEO and Executive Director of FPWA, Jennifer Jones Austin**.

The new disciplinary system fundamentally changes the way the Department of Correction responds to violence committed by people in custody, ensuring accountability and safety in a more humane and effective manner. The rules ends solitary confinement – a long-practiced form of restrictive housing where people are locked in their cells for 20-24 hours each day – and replaces it with a new alternative disciplinary model, the Risk Management Accountability System (RMAS). RMAS is a two-level progression model that includes:

- Attorney Representation at the infraction hearing and throughout the process
- Minimum 10 hours out of cell, socializing with at least one other person
- A strong presumption of progression from Level 1 to Level 2 in 15 days, and out of Level 2 in 15 days
- The ability for the Department to extend placement in RMA only when necessary; extension must be documented with a clear threat to safety; person in custody has ability to appeal with attorney representation
- Individualized behavioral support plans
- Steady, experienced case managers
- hours of daily programming, including required therapeutic programming in space outside the dayroom space; and

- Daily rounding by health and mental health staff
- Post-RMAS, step-down Restorative Rehabilitation Unit with 14 hours of lock out, full access to Minimum Standards, and intensive programming.

This new model will go into effect in the fall of 2021. The new disciplinary model is the product of an extensive public engagement process that included extensive discussions with and feedback from people with lived experience, families, staff, advocates, researchers, practitioners, and other experts locally and around the country.

The rule builds on groundbreaking reforms in 2015, which ended solitary confinement for 16 to 21 year olds and people with serious mental illness – and set strict limits on its use for everyone else. These reforms contributed to an 81% decrease in the use of solitary confinement. In October 2019, the Board proposed rules to further restrict solitary confinement however, the vast majority of community members who testified and/or submitted written comments on the proposal — solitary survivors and their loved ones; mental health, criminal justice, legal, and human rights experts; elected officials; faith leaders; and community members – said that new, proposed limits were not enough and called for the immediate end to solitary confinement. The Board’s new rule recognizes that solitary confinement creates significant risks of psychological and physical harm to people in custody.

“In approving this rule, the Board has created a system that ends the harms of solitary confinement while keeping officers, staff, and people detained safe. In the end the Board sought to address all stakeholders concerns and implement a model that centers on accountability, transparency, and support that we know will change behavior,” said **Board of Correction Vice Chair and Executive Vice President, Fortune Society, Stanley Richards.**

“The RMAS model is all about increasing safety without sacrificing accountability, and aimed at returning people to as normalized an environment as quickly as safely possible. Through this new approach, we intend to provide the tools people need to return to general population, and this model will only improve as we move towards more program-rich and humane facilities,” said **Department of Correction Commissioner Vincent Schiraldi.**

“The Board’s action today to end solitary confinement is the culmination of four years of work with experts, including individuals with lived experience, practitioners, families, officers and advocates. In developing this final rule, the Board was able to develop a model that ends the harms of solitary confinement and prioritizes safety and support. Our hope is that this work can inform and encourage the nation to safely end solitary confinement by ending it in New York City,” said **Board of Correction Executive Director Meg Egan.**

In addition to ending solitary confinement, the rule:

- Fully ends the use of routine restraint desks.
- Requires the Department to use cells for de-escalation confinement after incidents, rather than intake areas.
- Limits scope of lockdowns to only housing areas that must be locked down.
- Requires regular and public reporting by the Department.

- Maintains the prohibition on placing people with serious mental illness in restrictive housing (including RMAS)

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