



**NEW YORK CITY
BOARD OF CORRECTION**

JANUARY 10, 2024 PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

ATTENDEES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dwayne Sampson, Chair
Rachael Bedard, M.D., Member
Robert L. Cohen, M.D., Member
Felipe Franco, Member
Joseph Ramos, Member
Jacqueline Sherman, Esq., Member
Jacqueline Pitts, Member
Jude Torchenaud, Member

Jasmine Georges-Yilla, Executive Director

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION (DOC)

Lynelle Maginley-Liddie, Commissioner
Allie Robertson, Senior Policy Analyst of Special Projects
Chelsea Chard, Senior Policy Advisor
Charles Daniels, Senior Deputy Commissioner
James Saunders, Deputy Commissioner of Health Affairs
Charlton Lemon, Acting Assistant Chief
Sherrie Rembert, Assistant Chief of Administration
Allison Pace, Associate Commissioner of Operations
Robert Gonzalez, Deputy Commissioner of Training and Development
Kathleen Zadzora, Assistant Commissioner of Health Affairs
Angela Gonzalez, Correction Officer
Nancy Savasta, Acting General Counsel
Frank Dwyer, Deputy Commissioner for Public Information
Mark Pauley, Senior Policy Analyst

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS - CORRECTIONAL HEALTH SERVICES (CHS)

Patsy Yang, DrPH, Senior Vice President
Jeanette Merrill, MPH, Director of Communications and Intergovernmental Affairs
Carlos Castellanos, Chief Operations Officer/Deputy Executive Director
Nancy Arias, RN, Chief Nursing Officer/Deputy Executive Director
Bipin Subedi, Chief Medical Officer/Senior Assistant Vice President

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Chaplain Dr. Victoria A. Phillips, Jails Action Coalition and Visionary V Ministries
Mary Merkel, Bronx Defenders
Ashaki Antoine, COBA
Kiesha Williams, COBA
Eileen Maher, Vocal New York
Richie Agostinoni, NY1
Courtney Gross, NY1
Michael Klinger, Brooklyn Defenders
Ben Fractenberg, The City
Richenda Kramer, HALT
Rachel Sznajderman, NYCDS
Ryan Acquotta
Natalie Fiorenzo, NYCDS
Jennifer J. Parish, Urban Justice Center/Jails Action Coalition, HALT
Jeffrey Severe, NYC Office of the Public Advocate
Sarita Daftary, Urban Justice Center
Veronica Vela, Legal Aid Society
Lionel Cumberbatch, COBA

Introduction of Jude Torchenaud, Board Member

Chair Dwayne Sampson called the meeting to order with a quorum of members present. Chair Sampson welcomed and introduced new Board Member Jude Torchenaud. Board Member Torchenaud delivered his remarks, expressing his gratitude for the responsibility and honor to serve on the Board of Correction. See this portion of the video recording [here](#).

Approval of January 10, 2024 Meeting Agenda

Chair Dwayne Sampson called the meeting to order with a quorum of members present. Chair Sampson asked for a motion to approve the agenda of the Board's January 10, 2024 meeting. Board Member Bedard requested adding an agenda item regarding the opening of the Elmhurst Hospital women's psychiatric unit. There were no objections to the addition. Upon being moved and seconded, the agenda was approved unanimously (Chair Sampson and Members Bedard, Cohen, Franco, Ramos, Sherman, Pitts and Torchenaud). See this portion of the video recording [here](#).

Approval of November 14, 2023 Public Meeting Minutes

Chair Sampson asked for a motion to approve the draft public meeting minutes of the Board's November 14, 2023 meeting. Upon being moved and seconded, the minutes were approved unanimously (Chair Sampson and Members Bedard, Cohen, Franco, Ramos, Sherman, Pitts and Torchenaud). See this portion of the video recording [here](#).

Executive Director Update

BOC Executive Director Jasmine Georges-Yilla provided Board updates, starting with an update on BOC staff's work. ED Georges-Yilla reaffirmed the Board's commitment to independent oversight of the City's jails, transparency, accountability, and data-driven policymaking through rulemaking, investigations, and timely evidence-based reporting. The Board's Minimum Standards remain the leading standards nationwide for conditions of confinement and access to health and mental health care for people in custody. Over the past year, due to the persistence and extraordinary contributions of the Board's staff, the Board has successfully monitored and ensured compliance with several Minimum Standards, auditing processes to recommend improvements. Each day, the Board is reminded of the structural and longstanding challenges

facing the City's jails and the personal hardships generated and compounded there for people in custody, people who work there, and everyone who cares about them. The Board is committed this year to its own transparency and accountability by regularly reporting at each meeting its findings, concerns and questions regarding a particular topic that is covered by the Board's Minimum Standards. This will help make transparent the great volume of work undertaken by BOC staff. Last year, despite difficult circumstances, the Board published two death reports and a report on the NIC fire. In 2024, the Board is committed to providing more frequent and timely reporting centered on deaths, serious incidents, and Minimum Standard compliance.

In carrying out the Board's independent oversight, BOC looks forward to ongoing conversations with Commissioner Maginley-Liddie, CHS, advocates, and different stakeholders to achieve compliance with the Board's Minimum Standards and ensure structures of accountability and transparency are in place. Collaboration between all stakeholders will ensure that the Board is well-positioned to think critically and compassionately about the difficult issues at hand. See this portion of the video recording [here](#).

The Board expressed condolences for DOC staff who passed away in the past month. See this portion of the recording here. The Board also expressed condolences to the family of Chima Williams, who died in DOC custody on January 4, 2024. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

As of January 9, 2024, the approximate total census of people in custody is 6,056. This represents a 5.8% increase in population as of January 1, 2023, when there were approximately 5,726 people in custody. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

ED Georges-Yilla spoke about the public report issued on December 22, 2023 regarding the fire that took place in the North Infirmary Command on April 6, 2023. The upcoming death report covering the last four deaths that occurred in 2023 will be issued prior to the next Board meeting. The Board is committed to transparency and accuracy, with the objective of publishing reports on deaths in custody within six months of a death, as the investigation's circumstances allow. In addition to the upcoming death report, the Board will publish an assessment of the use of chemical agents in NYC jails. Board Member Cohen shared his concerns about NIC, in relation to the NIC fire report. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

Chair Sampson shared remarks about his commitment to developing the Board and the Board Members' continuity as the Board moves to meet its Charter mandate. Chair Sampson congratulated Commissioner Maginley-Liddie on her appointment. See this portion of the video [here](#).

People in Custody Public Comments

Recordings from people in custody were played. Watch this portion of the video [here](#).

Department of Correction Updates

a. Opening Remarks from Commissioner Lynelle Maginley-Liddie

Chair Sampson invited Commissioner Maginley-Liddie to deliver her opening remarks. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

b. DOC's plan for addressing complaints regarding lack of access to bedding (BOC Minimum Standard § 1-03(i)), linen exchange and laundry services (BOC Minimum Standard §§ 1-03(g) and (h))

ED Georges-Yilla provided background information regarding access to bedding, linen exchange, and laundry services.

Section 1-03(g) requires that Department issued clothing be laundered and repaired at the Department's expense. Upon establishment and operation of clothing services, the Department shall provide all persons in custody upon admission at least: two shirts, one pair of pants, four sets of undergarments, four pairs of socks, one pair of suitable footwear, and one sweater or sweatshirt to be issued during cold weather.

Section 1-03(h) requires that laundry service sufficient to provide people in custody with a clean change of personal or facility clothing at least twice per week shall be provided at the Department's expense.

Section 1-03(i) requires the following bedding items be issued to a person in custody upon admission to a facility: two sheets, one pillow, one pillow case, one mattress, one mattress cover, and sufficient blankets to provide comfort and warmth. All bedding items must be checked for damage and repaired or cleaned, if necessary, prior to being issued. Pillowcases and sheets must be cleaned at least once each week. Blankets must be cleaned at least once every three months. Mattresses must be cleaned at least once every six months. Mattresses must be constructed of fireproof materials. Mattress covers must be constructed of materials both water resistant and easily sanitized. And all items of clothing and bedding stored within the facility must be maintained in a safe and sanitary manner.

In reviewing grievances that the Department received from November 1st to December 26th, 2023, Board staff found a total of 59 complaints regarding bedding, linen exchange, or laundry. Our staff have been monitoring linen exchange in the different facilities and will continue to closely monitor this area in the coming months.

OBCC had the most grievances, followed by West Facility, and then GRVC. The issues reported at OBCC primarily revolve around bedding and linen exchange, laundry services, access to basic necessities, and temperature control. The issues reported at West Facility revolve around lack of linen and uniform exchange, environmental concerns, communication problems, and impact on recreation and mental health. The issues reported at GRVC revolve around uniform exchange delays, linen exchange challenges, hygiene and wellbeing concerns, communication obstacles and scheduling.

Board staff will continue to look into these issues and do a full assessment so we can report out any improvements or remaining concerns in a few months. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

Allison Pace, Associate Commissioner of Facility Operations, spoke on linen exchange, laundry services, and access to bedding. Associate Commissioner Pace stated that, upon admission, DOC provides people in custody with the following linen and bedding items: one washcloth, two sheets, two towels, one pillowcase, one fire-retardant mattress, and sufficient blankets to provide comfort and warmth. DOC also provides each person with the following clothing items: three uniforms, three undergarments, and three pairs of socks. Linen exchange occurs on a weekly basis and uniform exchange is to occur twice per week. Associate Commissioner Pace stated this was an exchange: a person in custody must surrender their soiled uniforms and items to receive clean ones. People in custody can do their own laundering twice per week. Linen items are provided to the facilities on a quarterly basis. The facilities can request additional items as needed. Associate Commissioner Pace noted that of a population of approximately 6,000 individuals, 27 complaints regarding laundry were filed in December 2023, amounting to less than

one percent of the population. Associate Commissioner Pace provided additional details about laundry services and linen exchanges. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

Board members asked Associate Commissioner Pace questions, including about how the Department manages linen exchange complaints from people in custody, where there are breakdowns in resolving grievances and underlying issues for weeks, and how correctional staff are responding and documenting complaints and how are those records reviewed by the Department. Associate Commissioner Pace indicated that the Department is looking into auditing their process of how linen and laundry exchange is happening. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

Board members asked further questions about how people in custody can get access to washing machines and dryers so people can launder their own clothing, whether there are DOC supervisors involved in laundry services, and what the Correction Industries Division is responsible for in terms of laundry and linen. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

Joint DOC and CHS Updates Regarding Sick Call

ED Georges-Yilla provided a background on the related Minimum Standards. The Board's rules (3-02(c)(5)) require "Adequate records shall be maintained daily which are distinguishable by housing area on a form developed by the Department of Correction. These records shall be maintained for at least three (3) years. The form shall include the following:

- (i) the names and number of inmates requesting sick call;
- (ii) the names and numbers of inmates arriving in the clinic; and
- (iii) the names and number of inmates seen by health care personnel.

(6) The use of a sick-call sign up sheet shall not preclude the use of sick-call by inmates who are not on the list."

Based on past presentations from DOC and CHS, it is BOC's understanding that CHS and DOC continue to rely on the CHS Health Triage Line instead of sign-up sheets. ED Georges-Yilla asked DOC and CHS to explain the current practice and the plan for complying with this Minimum Standard. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

DOC Deputy Commissioner of Health Affairs, James Saunders, CHS's Chief Nursing Officer, Nancy Arias, and CHS's Senior Vice President Patsy Yang presented on this topic jointly. DC Saunders stated that DOC relies on CHS to document sick call through the Health Triage Line, which people in custody can contact via phone. DOC is able to pull data from the Securus system to measure the volume of calls. With respect to recordkeeping required by the Board's Minimum Standards, DC Saunders stated that CHS provides DOC with a monthly list of sick calls pursuant to Local Law 132. DOC is not made aware of the reason for the sick calls, due to confidentiality concerns. CHS Senior Vice President Patsy Yang clarified that CHS created the Health Triage Line and began planning it in 2019 to allow patients to contact CHS directly without having to be escorted to the clinic. Senior VP Yang stated that the Health Triage Line was created separately from sick call and it was not designed to replace sick call. The data provided to DOC is about CHS's process. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

CHS and DOC answered questions from Board members and ED Georges-Yilla. See the question-and-answer portion of this section [here](#).

DOC Updates Regarding Elmhurst Hospital Women's Psychiatric Ward

DOC provided updates regarding the opening of the women's psychiatric ward at Elmhurst Hospital. DC Saunders stated the ward would be opening the week of January 22, 2024. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

CHS Updates Regarding Staffing Levels for Sick Call

CHS Chief Operations Officer and Deputy Executive Director, Carlos Castellanos, provided information about how CHS staff the clinics and the average number of staff available in the clinics per shift. CHS also answered Board member questions. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

COBA Updates

COBA Third Vice President Ashaki Antoine and COBA Second Vice President Keisha Williams presented updates regarding DOC uniformed staff concerns, including concerns about sexual assault in the jails, the recently enacted bill banning solitary confinement, assaults on staff, and other issues. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

Public Comment

The Board heard public comment from Mary Merkel (Bronx Defenders), Michael Klinger (BDS), Chaplain Dr. Victoria A. Phillips (Jails Action Coalition and Visionary V Ministries), Natalie Fiorenzo (NYCDS), Rachel Sznajderman (NYCDS), Veronica Vela (Legal Aid Society), and Eileen Maher (Vocal New York). The public comments portion of this video recording is available [here](#).