



June 27, 2016

Stanley Brezenoff, Chair
Martha King, Executive Director
NYC Board of Correction
1 Centre Street, Room 2213
New York, NY 10007

Re: GMDC update

Dear Mr. Brezenoff and Ms. King:

I am writing to update you on recent issues related to GMDC. Since the beginning of this month, June 2016, GMDC has experienced a considerable uptick in events, including inmate fights, inmates refusing orders, Assaults on Staff including splashings, Uses of Force, and even more violent incidents such as slashings. In conjunction, issues related to intake and clinic, such as specific spikes of incidents within those areas and deficiencies in production to and from these areas, have also increased. The overall uptick has coincided with the Department's rapid efforts to make final moves that consolidate young adults into the facility. This has included, in particular, a significant increase in the number and concentration of "high risk for violence" young adults, who were located outside of the facility until recently. These high-risk young adults grew from 44 the last week of May to 76 by the end of the first week of June.

While working to manage this increasingly challenging population, GMDC is also training new staff. 160 new officers from the Academy were also posted on duty at GMDC and are working with the young adult population for the first time. These new officers help GMDC in the long run, but in the immediate future demand the attention of senior staff and managers to train them in young adult management.

Recognizing issues facing that facility and in an attempt to properly manage the facility, the Department has implemented a plan to address some of the overarching issues it has identified.

1. The Department has introduced increased management and senior leadership presence to do scheduled tours in the facility every day for a time to ensure improved results. The specific purposes are to ensure proper compliance with department policies and protocols (from both inmates and staff) and to mentor and further develop new staff in the facility. This level of management includes additional Wardens, Deputy Wardens, Assistant Deputy Wardens, and Captains rotating in each day on the 1500x2330 hours tour.

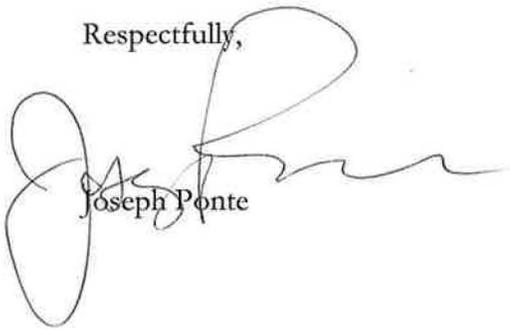
2. The Department's Emergency Services Unit (ESU) have been deployed specifically to GMDC to conduct daily tours with the assistance of Special Search Teams, K-9 units, and the Department's Correctional Intelligence Bureau (CIB). Extra emphasis has also been made to ensure lockdowns are isolated to specific affected areas, discouraging facility-wide lockdowns unless absolutely necessary. Guidance has been given to facility leadership to ensure the operations of the facility continue throughout the majority of the building as best as they can, even if there are incidents in specific areas that require heightened response.
3. Additional Adult Mentors and Program Counselors have been re-assigned to high-classification housing areas to provide focused programming, and additional recreation (gym and outside yards) schedules have been developed to expand recreation availability – all to better engage the inmates within these areas.
4. Maintenance crews have also now been assigned daily to help monitor and remove items that young adults have been using to jam cell door locks.
5. Additional officers are also being assigned to high-classification and special housing areas – ensuring the assignment of a “D” and “E” officer for the time being. While an entire facility-wide effort is necessary, high concentration of incidents (20%) involve a small number of inmates (15) that are high-classification young adults.
6. Specific monitoring of intake and clinic operations by facility staff has been instituted to decrease any wait times in the intake, properly and expediently re-house inmates (and new admissions), and ensure more effective and efficient movement to clinic and court. These are specific areas of focus for all additional external management resources that are assigned to tour the facility (see point 1), and they are expected to report out on intake wait times.
 - a. As noted by various board members and Correctional Health Services (CHS) a series of incidents, alarms, and lockdowns disrupted movement and of inmates to clinic (specifically from both housing units and intake), which caused delay in bringing both injured inmates to clinic and various medical appointments missed during this time. However, based on the recent efforts, these issues have been improved. One, ESU is handling emergency response, which should relieve staff to continue to perform escorted movement during this time of increased incidents. The Department will continue to work with H&H to best coordinate necessary production, regardless of any incidents that occur. This weekend, an additional supervisor was assigned to GMDC to help with both refusals and prioritization.
7. The Department has instituted a daily classification and movement team meeting to ensure proper classification, housing, and gang separation efforts across the facility and department for this 18-21 year old population. We concluded that over 30% of the incidents that

occurred could be attributed to some gang separation and classification issue that required closer investigation and review before movement. In addition, the Department is currently assessing its use of Second Chance, TRU, and Secure Unit, with the potential need to maintain continued separation amongst some of the problematic young adults, to include housing in a facility other than GMDC. 36% of the incidents that occurred since the beginning of June involved TRU alum who had returned to general population. A more detailed review of TRU release decisions is necessary. For some young adults, further time in TRU, or a step down housing placement, may be necessary before consideration of a release to general population

8. Specific problematic inmates have currently been moved out of GMDC to AMKC 7 Upper and another potential area in OBCC may be used once Young Adult Punitive Segregation is ended. At this time, 788 young adults are in GMDC out of a possible 872. 25 young adults were identified (9 with 3+ UOF incidents related to each of them) and moved late last week to AMKC, and the 84 inmates currently not in GMDC will not be moved in as planned this week. The calming effect of adults with some of this young adult population, the need for further separation of some of the population from the majority of young adults, and time for new staff to better become comfortable with the management of young adults are all factors that need to be re-visited and assessed now that we have reached this point in our young adult consolidation efforts. Thought is being given to establishing a longer-term set of dedicated young adult housing units in GRVC (in the restarted housing units).

Overall, these steps and reviews are ongoing. However, since placing these efforts in place, there has been a slight lowering of incidents, with 16 incidents between Friday and Sunday, as opposed to 46 during the four days preceding that. The Department will continue to monitor, and is still in the process of continuing to refine, further efforts that will best manage the young adult population within our Department. The Department needs to slow down consolidation of young adults into GMDC, which will not impact the ending of punitive segregation for this population, but may delay the ending of co-mingling of young adults at this time. The Department is available to provide a more detailed briefing or to answer follow-on questions should the Board need.

Respectfully,



Joseph Ponte