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Martha King
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Record of Variance Action

Draft – to be considered on November 10, 2015.

The Board plans to vote on whether to approve or deny the variance request described in this document. The Board additionally plans to vote on whether to attach a condition to the variance. That proposed condition is described in this document as well.

On November 10, 2015, the NYC Board of Correction voted to APPROVE/RENEW/DENY the Department of Correction's request for a continuing variance from BOC Minimum Standard 1-03, regarding suicide smocks and suicide resistant bedding.

This variance enables the Department to have suicide watch inmates wear specially designed clothing, and use special bedding materials, which reduce the risk of inmate suicide. The clothing and bedding are tear resistant and difficult to manipulate, preventing suicide watch inmates from creating nooses to use to commit suicide. These suicide resistant articles are commonly used for suicide watch inmates in jails and prisons in the United States.

Type of Variance: Continuing

Date on which variance will commence: November 10, 2015

Time period, if any: N/A

Minimum Standard for which Variance is Granted: 1-03

Date on which Board of Correction first approved variance (for renewals only): N/A

PROPOSED requirements imposed as conditions on variance:

- Only mental health providers may place a prisoner on suicide watch and require the use of a suicide smock and bedding;
- Officers assigned to areas where prisoners are on suicide watch must make frequent, irregular observations of these prisoners (at least four per hour).
- Unless inappropriate for compelling security or medical reasons, prisoners on suicide watch should be housed in dormitories. Dormitory prisoners may be

required to wear smocks only in dormitories where all other prisoners are clothed in suicide smocks.

- Unless prohibited in writing by the provider, prisoners on suicide watch must be permitted personal hygiene items and personal items, including reading materials and photographs.
- Prisoners wearing suicide smocks shall be provided with daily exchanges of clean smocks and undergarments. Disposable undergarments will be provided with a uniform whenever prisoners leave their cell.
- Suicide watch prisoners shall be permitted to wear civilian clothing when inside a court room for trial.