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June 12, 2017

VIA EMAIL

Jeff Thamkittikasem
Chief of Staff, New York City Department of Correction
75-20 Astoria Blvd
East Elmhurst, New York 11370

RE: Enhanced Supervision Housing (ESH) Young Adult Monitoring and Evaluation Outline

Dear Mr. Thamkittikasem:

We thank the Department for the clear and significant progress you have made in developing a plan to monitor and evaluate Young Adult ESH, as required by condition to the Young Adult ESH variances approved on February 14, 2017. We agree that tracking people's progress will allow for, "better insight into effective practices to manage and support" these young adults.

Many elements of your plan will move the Department closer toward implementing the monitoring and data recommendations made by Board of Correction staff in our April 2017 ESH assessment. In particular, we would like to highlight several promising aspects of the ESH Young Adult Monitoring and Evaluation Outline that you submitted to the Board on May 9, 2017:

- Reporting ESH metrics monthly;
- Undertaking a comparison at the individual level of ESH's impact on uses of force, stabbings, slashings, and fight involvement;
- Monitoring programming and mandated services;
- Analyzing 45-day reviews completed;
- Analyzing the time between a person's last incident/infraction and his placement date; and
- Evaluating effectiveness of ESH in violence reduction for ESH young adults, general population units, and relative to punitive segregation units.

We would also like to highlight some important places that need additional attention in your plan. The plan must address these questions and concerns to comply with the variance condition:

- The condition asks for a focus on implementation of the Standards. The Department's submission lacks a clear plan for collecting, reporting, and evaluating Minimum Standards data (law library access, medical and mental health care access, education, legal or personal calls), the lock-in Standard that is a foundation of ESH, and recreation and religious service access.
- The plan does not address due process and additional restrictions (visiting, restraint desks, etc.). These are important parts of the ESH Minimum Standards and the Department's directive.
- As you have reported that ESH is a new and changing model, how will these metrics evolve with the program?
- How do you intend to handle the stated data limitations in the short and long term?
- What metrics can the Board expect to see this month and going forward? The plan should be clear as to when the Department will begin to report each metric and the frequency of reporting.
- Given the relatively small number of young adults housed in ESH to-date and the fact that the structure of ESH has changed over the course of implementation, we believe it may be premature to expect to see violence reductions at the individual-level and in the general population at this stage. We encourage the Department to prioritize initially capturing and reporting those ESH metrics related to the Minimum Standards and those related to outcomes for young adults. This information could then be used to inform more meaningful outcome evaluation in the coming months.
- As mentioned in the Department's plan, ESH is designed to house "inmates who drive institutional violence" under the rationale that "only a small group of violent inmates account for a sizeable portion of violent incidents in the general population." How does the Department intend to monitor its exercise of discretion in ESH placement decisions (overall and with respect to placements in other young adult housing options)? How does the Department intend to monitor whether ESH is placing the population that will maximize violence reduction?

The Board looks forward to working with the Department to improve the metrics and evaluation plan – and, ultimately, use this data to inform and improve policy and practice.

Sincerely,



Emily Turner
Deputy Executive Director of Research