



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION
Joseph Ponte, Commissioner

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October 22, 2016

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

Dear Mr. Brezenoff:

The New York City Department of Correction ("Department") is requesting an emergency variance pursuant to §1-15(b)(3) of the New York City Board of Correction's ("Board") minimum standards from sections: 1-03 Personal Hygiene, 1-06 Recreation, 1-07 Religion, 1-08(f) Access to Courts and Legal Services (regarding access to the law library only), 1-09 Visiting, and 1-10 Telephone Calls of the Board's minimum standards for the Otis Bantum Correctional Center (OBCC). We are seeking this emergency variance for a period of two (2) days, effective immediately, to ensure that the safety and security of OBCC is maintained and that all inmates and staff are kept safe.

On October 20, 2016, an assault on staff, two (2) slashings and two (2) inmate fights resulting in serious injuries, all occurring within a short span of time at OBCC, necessitated the Department to institute a facility lockdown to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the situation including thorough searches and intelligence investigations. The lockdown commenced on October 21, 2016 with the deployment of the Special Operations Division. The Department has made and will continue to make every effort to limit the scope of the lockdown and any disruption to services. As searches and investigations are completed, the lockdown will be lifted where feasible and safe to do so. During the lockdown, medical and mental health services will be maintained and showers will be afforded to all inmates.

Despite our best efforts, we are unable to achieve full compliance with the above noted provisions of the minimum standards for the duration of the lockdown period, in order to effectively identify, evaluate, and neutralize all threats and maintain the safety and security of the facility. On Sunday morning, the situation will be assessed to determine whether additional time is required to continue the investigation. The Department will notify the Board immediately if the variance can be ended early or if it needs to be extended.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact Heidi Grossman at (718) 546-0955.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph Ponte".

Joseph Ponte

cc: Martha King, Executive Director