



Commissioner Cynthia Brann
Remarks to the Board of Correction
January 9th, 2018

Good morning and Happy New Year to all of you.

I am in hopes that 2018 is the year that we all work together in cooperation and collaboration with mutual respect to solve problems. Let me start by saying that the Department remains committed to our young adult plan.

Housing the majority of our young adults in young adult specific housing units with trained officers, appropriate programming and alternative management models that move away from the overuse of punitive segregation.

So in review:

- We ended the use of punitive segregation for 18-21 year-olds.
- We introduced broad programming, including age-specific programming to ensure that five hours of programming are offered to each person in our custody.
- We increased our adolescent and young adult programming budget from a couple of hundred thousand dollars a year to over 17 million dollars a year.
- We trained our officers that are working with young adults in safe crisis-management and other youth-specific curricula. And we made a joint commitment across uniform and non-uniform leadership and delivered

results through the officers and civilian staff who have driven and continue to drive major culture change across the agency.

These goals are not just the Department's goals but also the goals of the City. And our shared goals also include reducing our population over the next 10 years, closing facilities on Rikers and designing and building modern community-based facilities.

The announcement of the City to close GMDC later this year is part of that commitment. And we announced that move early to make sure that we could properly plan and coordinate with the unions, our staff and program providers.

So many, if not most young adults, will stay in young-adult only units. However in keeping with the targeted-housing approach, the Department will continue to make custody-management decisions for young adults that balance safety, security and programming.

Comingled units may be the most appropriate for some and not others. Which as we have stated before is why we seek this comingling variance until we have a chance to formalize it through rule making.

So why close GMDC? The answer is because we have collectively worked with the City to balance the overall commitment to close Rikers with our current commitment to safely manage our population. And we can do that safely and efficiently with the closure of GMDC. The number of young adults in DOC custody has decreased from January 2016 at 1140 young adults to 851 in December of 2017.

Young adults currently represent only 9.8 percent of the total population down from 11.5 percent. As you are well aware GMDC's population has been at less than 50 percent capacity because of necessary repairs. And it has been operating inefficiently. GMDC was the facility with the smallest population and given upcoming changes that will occur because of Raise the Age, adolescents will be moved off island.

And when that law comes into effect, freeing up space for reconsolidation of young adults into RNDC.

So by summer, our preliminary plan is that 18-year-olds will move into RNDC because it has the infrastructure, the program space and the culture of working with the young population since 2014.

19 to 21 year olds will move into EMTC with the goal of being able to create young-adult specific housing units there and eventually the majority of the young adults will be consolidated into RNDC.

Our goal is to maintain programming levels in young adult units whether in RNDC or EMTC. Many young adults will continue to receive age-specific programming as the program providers and counselors will remain with that population.

However, we announced in concert with the City to show our commitment and we are now working on the specifics. I want everyone to remember that the true value of GMDC's success since the summer of 2016, is not with the building. It's the staff.

The staff at every level took a targeted approach to addressing multiple aspects of young adult custody management which will continue in other facilities. So we will look at security, programming, specialized units, specialized programs as incentives, the programming space at GMDC, programming space at RNDC.

Health and mental health working with our staff collaboratively with the education staff and having community engagement. All of these staffs working together is what creates the success for that population, not the building.

Internally, the announcement of the closure will allow ample opportunity to more efficiently deploy staff, reduce overtime, improve working conditions across the board for all of our staff, increase training, catch up on in-service training that has fallen behind, speed up our Nunez training, and our specialized training as needed and requested. We have a new class that just started this week that will be coming out in the beginning of the summer, allowing us to utilize savings from the closing of the facility to significantly enhance our training efforts.

Q and A- So this will not affect headcount?

No, no, we are suffering no layoffs from this. Every effort will be made to allow those who want to continue working with this population to do so, within limits of their union contracts.

There will still be a young adult units only where staff can continue to use the skills and training and culture change they have experienced at GMDC. More staff

available for post and high classification housing units, whether in young adults only units or others will improve our results and increase safety for our staff and inmates.

I want to reaffirm our commitment to the plan and we have no change in plans to the young adult program.