

April 2, 2020

Hon. Andrew Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Cc:

Hon. Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Majority Leader, New York State Senate
188 State Street LOB - Room 907
Albany, NY 12247

Hon. Carl Heastie
Speaker, New York State Assembly
New York State Capitol Room 349
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Governor Andrew M. Cuomo,

In the wake of COVID-19, we write you as public and corrections health experts, physicians, and medical professionals, to ask you to grant emergency clemencies to New Yorkers in prison who are older, sick, pregnant, have serious respiratory conditions, or who have otherwise compromised immune systems. As COVID-19 continues to spread throughout New York State, it will also continue to spread throughout the state prison system. This will have devastating consequences for incarcerated New Yorkers, their families, prison staff, and entire communities throughout the state.

Over the years and decades we've worked in incarceration settings, we've seen the serious damage done to people in prison and jail by HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, MRSA, Tuberculosis, seasonal influenza, and other viruses and communicable diseases. Correctional settings were and continue to be hotbeds for the spread of these outbreaks. Whether it's on prison cellblocks, in mess halls, program areas, or hallways, close contact among people in correctional settings is absolutely unavoidable and inevitably means the virus will be susceptible to serious spreading.

As in the outside world, we are particularly concerned about the health and well being of incarcerated older adults, people with serious chronic conditions, and others who are particularly vulnerable to the virus and its health consequences. There are currently roughly 10,000 older New Yorkers in prison who will be significantly endangered once the virus enters the prisons, including people in hospice units and regional medical units. This population generally poses the least risk to public safety, including those convicted of violent crimes, is the most difficult to care for, and requires critical state resources while confined.

We urge you to act before it's too late on behalf of incarcerated people and their families by granting emergency clemencies to incarcerated older New Yorkers and others who are vulnerable to the virus. Doing so would save lives and resources that could be reinvested

into necessary public health tools during this serious time. Thank you for considering our urgent request.

Sincerely,

- **Dr. Homer Venters**, MD, Former Medical Officer New York City Jail System
- **Dr. Robert Cohen**, Physician, NYC Board of Correction Commissioner
- **Dr. Rachael Bedard**, MD, Correctional Health Services
- **Dr. Jonathan Giftos**, Former Medical Director, Correctional Health Services and Medical Director, Addiction Medicine & Drug User Health Project Renewal, Inc.
- **Dr. Antonio Urbina**, Medical Director, Icahn School of Medicine Institute for Advanced Medicine
- **Dr. Kimberly Sue**, Medical Director, Harm Reduction Coalition
- **Dr. Robert Fullilove**, Professor and Associate Dean, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University
- **Dr. Charles Branas**, Professor and Chair of the Department of Epidemiology, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health
- **Dr. Louise Kuhn**, Professor of Epidemiology, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University Medical Center
- **Dr. Scarlett Murphy**, MD, NYC Health and Hospitals
- **Dr. Carol Schneebaum**, MD, Physicians for a National Health Program
- **Dr. Julie Wegener**, MD, Physicians for a National Health Program-NY Metro
- **Dr. Oliver Fein**, MD, Chair, Physicians for a National Health Program-NY Metro
- **Dr. Andrew Coates**, MD, Albany Medical College
- **Dr. Elizabeth Rosenthal**, MD, Physicians for a National Health Program
- **Dr. Emma Chew Murphy**, MD, Montefiore Medical Center
- **Dr. Laura Ucik**, MD, Montefiore Medical Center
- **Dr. Leo Eisenstein**, MD, Bellevue Hospital
- **Dr. Mariya Masyukova**, Albert Einstein College of Medicine
- **Dr. Mary Obrien**, MD, Physicians for a National Health Program
- **Dr. Matthew Akiyama**, MD, Montefiore Medical Center
- **Dr. Sandra Turner**, MD, Physicians for a National Health Plan
- **Dr. Sara Kass-Gergi**, New York Presbyterian at Columbia
- **Dr. Benjamin Asriel**, MD, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
- **Dr. Howard Waitzkin**, MD, PhD, University of New Mexico
- **Dr. Steve Auerbach**, MD. MPH, Physicians for National Health Plan, NY-Metro
- **Dr. Brie Williams**, MD, MS, Professor of Medicine, University of California San Francisco (for identification purposes only; does not imply a position of the University)
- **Dr. Lorie Goshin**, PhD, RN, Associate Professor of Nursing
- **Dr. Tina Maschi**, PhD, Professor Fordham University School of Social Work
- **Dr. Sacred Kelly**, Partners In Health
- **Dr. Benjamin Meza**, Johns Hopkins
- **Dr. Rachael Wilson**, School of Visual Arts

- **Dr. Samantha Plummer**, Columbia Justice Lab
- **Dr. Amanda Klonsky**, Harvard University
- **Dr. Gregg Gonsalves**, PhD, Assistant Professor, Yale School of Public Health
- **Dr. Scott Stonington**, Physician, University of Michigan
- **Dr. Mardge Cohen**, Physician, Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program
- **Dr. Ashwin Vasani**, President & CEO, Fountain House
- **Dr. Rachel Sherman**, Professor (PhD), The New School
- **Dr. Susan Reverby**, Professor Emerita, Wellesley College
- **Dr. Judith Feinberg**, Professor of Medicine & Professor of Behavioral Medicine and Psychiatry, West Virginia University
- **Dr. Nancy Krieger**, Professor of Social Epidemiology, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health
- **Dr. Andrea Lyman**, MD, MSC, MS, Public Health and Primary Care Provider
- **Dr. Angelica Saada**, MD
- **Dr. MaryLouise Patterson**, MD
- **Dr. Norty Kalishman**, MD
- **Dr. Amanda Ramsdel**, MD
- **Dr. Victoria Sharp**, MD
- **Dr. Howard Grossman**, MD
- **Dr. Ellen Isaacs**, MD, APHA, PHR
- **Dr. Chanelle Diaz** MD, MPH, Internal Medicine Physician
- **Dr. Scott Nass**, MD MPA FAAFP AAHIVS
- **Dr. Sandhya Kumar**, MD MPH
- **Dr. Debra Lavin**, EdD, Psychologist
- **Dr. Catherine Varnum**, Resident Physician
- **Kassandra Frederique**, Executive Director, Drug Policy Alliance
- **Daniel Raymond**, Deputy Director of Planning and Policy, Harm Reduction Coalition
- **Lauren Canary**, Director, National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable
- **Mandy Altman**, Director, National Hepatitis Corrections Network
- **Leon Kirschner**, Director of Occupational Therapy, iHOPE Academy
- **Aisha Davis**, Director of Policy, AIDS Foundation of Chicago
- **Andrew Scott**, Director of Policy, Global Liver Institute
- **Micaela Linder**, Director of Research, The Fortune Society
- **Amber Piatt**, Health Instead of Punishment Program Director, Human Impact Partners
- **Jeremiah Johnson**, HIV Project Director, Treatment Action Group
- **A. Toni Young**, Executive Director, Community Education Group
- **Gretchen Bergman**, Executive Director, A New PATH (Parents for Addiction Treatment & Healing)
- **Heather Lusk**, Executive Director, Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center
- **Lorren Sandt**, Executive Director, Caring Ambassadors Program, Inc
- **Mark Harrington**, Executive Director, Treatment Action Group
- **Sean Strub**, Executive Director, Sero Project

- **Tom Viola**, Executive Director, Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS
- **Ronni Marks**, Founder/Executive Director, The Hepatitis C Mentor and Support Group
- **Bruce Richman**, Founding Executive Director, Prevention Access Campaign
- **Annette Gaudino**, State & Local Policy Director, Treatment Action Group
- **Suraj Madoori**, U.S. and Global Health Policy Director Treatment Action Group
- **Kimberleigh Smith**, Senior Director for Community Health Planning and Policy, Callen-Lorde Community Health Center
- **Daniel Gillespie**, Adult Nurse Practitioner, Brightpoint Health
- **Jenny Ajl**, Advanced Practice Registered Nurse
- **Aileen Steiner**, Nurse Practitioner
- **Andrea Griffith-Cain**, Licensed Practical Nurse
- **Charlotte Marx-Arpati**, MS, Registered Nurse., Columbia University
- **Nancy Chez**, Nurse Practitioner, Brightpoint Health
- **Patricia Dellatto**, Nurse Practitioner, Community Action for Social Justice
- **Carolyn Dickie**, Nurse Practitioner
- **Bree Ferrin**, Nurse Practitioner
- **Emmet Phipps**, Nurse Practitioner, New York Presbyterian Hospital
- **Devynn Emory**, Registered Nurse
- **Michelle San Pedro**, Registered Nurse Supervisor, Windham Hospital
- **Alice Sturm Sutter**, Family Nurse Practitioner, Uptown Progressive Action
- **Kate Kozeniewski**, Registered Nurse
- **Lynn Cortella**, Registered Nurse, Centers Healthcare
- **Sandra Langston**, Registered Nurse, CUNY Graduate Center
- **Kimberly Murray**, Registered Nurse, BSN
- **Mary Canales**, Nursing Instructor, Simmons University
- **Noelle Fries**, MPH, CUNY School of Public Health
- **Elizabeth Horowitz**, PA, MS, MPH
- **Erica Avidano**, WHNP, MPH
- **Ellen Israel**, MPH, BSN, CNM
- **Alysse Wurcel**, Assistant Professor, Tufts Medical Center
- **Ellen McCabe**, Assistant Professor, Hunter College
- **Merlin Chowkwanyun**, Assistant Professor of Sociomedical Sciences, Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health
- **Helena Hansen**, Associate Professor, New York University
- **Michael Ralph**, Associate Professor, New York University
- **Joseph Osmundson**, Clinical Assistant Professor, New York University
- **Daniel Cook Associate Professor**, University of Nevada Reno
- **Mamta Swaroop**, Associate Professor of Surgery, Northwestern University
- **Kate Dickin**, Associate Research Professor, Cornell University
- **Gerald Markowitz**, Distinguished Professor, John Jay College of Criminal Justice
- **Sarah Schulman**, Distinguished Professor, City University of New York
- **Samuel Roberts**, Professor, Columbia University

- **Sarah Zeller-Berkman**, Professor, CUNY School of Professional Studies
- **Steven Thrasher**, Professor, Northwestern University
- **Anne-Emanuelle Birn**, Professor, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto
- **Emily Mendenhall**, Medical Anthropologist, Provost's Distinguished Associate Professor, Georgetown University
- **Martha Livingston**, Public Health Chair and Professor, SUNY Old Westbury
- **Ana Djordjevic**, Board Member, Physicians for a National Health Program
- **Reginald Brown**, Board Member, VOCAL-NY
- **Charles Hawthorne**, Capacity Building Coordinator, Harm Reduction Coalition
- **Debra Graner**, National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable
- **Charles King**, CEO, Housing Works, Inc.
- **Elise Schuster**, CEO, okayso
- **Jason Sterne**, Chief Operating Officer, Hepatitis Education Project
- **Suzanne Burger**, Clinical Psychologist, Westchester Citizen Therapists
- **Eric L. Sawyer**, Co- Founder, Housing Works, Inc.
- **Christian Urrutia**, Co-Founder, The PrEP4All Collaboration
- **JD Davids**, Cofounder, Chronic Illness Leadership For Emergent Times (CILFET)
- **Mary Crippen**, Marketing and Outreach Manager, Bronx Regional Health Information Organization
- **Allison Blader**, Community Health Organizer, Montefiore Medical Group
- **Cara Skillingstead**, Correctional Health Program Coordinator, Hepatitis Education Project
- **Kate Ferguson**, Editor-in-Chief, Real Health Magazine
- **Elizabeth Lovinger**, Government Relations & Policy Officer, Treatment Action Group
- **Talia Baurer**, Health Education & Access Coordinator, The Institute for Family Health
- **Abigail Abramm**, Program Coordinator, Step-Up, Inc.
- **Margaret Bordeaux**, Justice-Involved Overdose Prevention Specialist, CDC Foundation
- **Michelle Pelan**, LCSW DOHMH
- **Christopher Murray**, LCSW-R, Center for Advanced Medicine, Mt. Sinai Hospital
- **Juanita Carter-Fuller**, Lead Outreach Worker, North Shore University Hospital
- **Lora Garcia**, Midwife, Planned Parenthood
- **Celso Santiago**, Peer Advocate, Peer Network Of New York
- **Gene Liaw**, Physician Assistant, Memorial Sloan Kettering
- **Karina Galvin**, Physician Assistant, New York Presbyterian
- **Joy Birungi**, Public Health and Policy American University of Beirut
- **Tim Murphy**, Public Health Journalist, POZ, HEPmag, TheBody.com, ACLU magazine, Lambda Legal
- **Mary Ann Castle**, Senior Associate, Planning Alternatives for Change

- **Barbara Zeller**, Senior Medical Advisor, Brightpoint Health
- **Jaron Benjamin**, Vice President, Community Mobilization, Housing Works
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- **Phoebe Miller**, MD Student, University California San Francisco
- **Elizabeth Kinnard**, PhD Student, UC Berkeley School of Public Health
- **Cynthia Golembeski**, PhD/JD Student, Rutgers University
- **Michi Osato**, Acupuncture and Chinese Herbal Student, Pacific College of Health Sciences