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*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

***Legal Aid Condemns DOCCS For Refusing To Test Incarcerated People
And Ignoring New Guidelines From The CDC Calling For Regular
Testing Of All Persons Currently Incarcerated***

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society condemned the New York State Department of Correction and Community Supervision (DOCCS) for refusing to follow recently released testing [protocols](#) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) specific to correctional settings. These protocols call for for universal and regularly recurring testing of everyone residing or working in correctional settings.

By DOCCS' own admission, it tests only people who are symptomatic or who have had direct contact with others who have tested positive for COVID. This has led DOCCS to [test only a very small percentage of incarcerated people](#). Legal Aid's own information from clients suggests that DOCCS may not be following its own protocols as clients who were feeling ill and exhibiting at least some symptoms were refused testing.

In accordance with CDC guidelines, the State of North Carolina's Department of Public Safety [reported in a recent statement](#) that it had initiated plans to test all 31,000 individuals for COVID-19 currently incarcerated at state correctional facilities within 60 days.

The Legal Aid Society said - "The refusal from DOCCS to follow CDC recommendations to protect people from contracting and spreading COVID-19 endangers the lives of all New Yorkers incarcerated in state prisons. We know from our clients and from what DOCCS has admitted publicly that it is not testing incarcerated people as it should and could be. Governor Cuomo and DOCCS should stop risking the lives of incarcerated people and follow the recommendations of Dr. Anthony Fauci and the CDC to adopt universal testing protocols for our clients and others who live and work in state prisons."

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The Legal Aid Society exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For over 140 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities. www.legalaidnyc.org