

October 15, 2020

Contact:

Redmond Haskins
The Legal Aid Society
(929) 441-2384
rhaskins@legal-aid.org

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

Legal Aid Warns of Second Surge Within NYS Prison System as COVID-19 Cases Skyrocket at Greene County Correctional Facility

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society [warned](#) of a second surge of COVID-19 cases within New York State prisons as 94 incarcerated New Yorkers have now tested positive for COVID-19 at Greene County Correctional Facility as of October 14, 2020, an increase of 81 cases in just one week. To date, 17 New Yorkers in DOCCS custody have died from the virus and close to 900 have tested positive. For those who have been infected, the lingering effects and long-term complications of the virus remain unknown.

In June, The Legal Aid Society condemned DOCCS for refusing to follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) testing protocols specific to correctional settings. The CDC calls for universal and regularly recurring testing of everyone residing or working in correctional settings. DOCCS' testing practices, which are constantly shifting and have never been fully revealed, fall far short of these recommendations. This has led DOCCS to test an insufficient number of incarcerated people and, by all appearances, virtually none of those people have been tested more than once.

"It unfortunately appears that the second surge of COVID-19 has arrived within New York States prison system," said **Stefen Short, Supervising Attorney with the Prisoners' Rights Project at The Legal Aid Society**. "To date, 17 New Yorkers in DOCCS custody have succumbed to the virus and hundreds more have been infected. DOCCS is wholly incapable of stopping further spread. We again call on Governor Cuomo and DOCCS to immediately release the most medically vulnerable people who face grave risk of serious injury or death if infected by COVID-19. Releasing these individuals serves to protect not only them, but also those who continue to live and work in DOCCS facilities by enabling the kind of social distancing that affords the only meaningful protection against the spread of this disease."

###

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. <https://www.legalaidnyc.org>