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

***Legal Aid Analysis: 14 Different NYS Prisons Across NYS Saw an Increase Totaling 82 Positive COVID-19 Cases in Just Five Days***

***Defenders Reaffirm Call on Cuomo, DOCCS to Release Vulnerable New Yorkers Immediately***

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society released an analysis of New York State Department of Correction and Community Supervision (DOCCS) data which revealed that 14 different New York State prisons saw a significant increase in positive COVID-19 cases in just five days, between December 3, 2020 and December 8, 2020. The increase totaled 82 new cases, which brings the DOCCS count of incarcerated New Yorkers who have tested positive for the virus to 1,921. Since the pandemic, 18 people in DOCCS’ custody have succumbed to the virus. This recent jump merely highlights what has become crystal clear: that, with the onset of New York’s second COVID wave, cases in DOCCS facilities throughout the state continue to rise steadily and uncontrolled. Absent significant intervention by Governor Cuomo or DOCCS, it is apparent that the situation will only worsen and that the consequences will be tragic.

Link to analysis: <https://legalaidnyc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/DOCCS-COVID-Difference-in-Cases-12.3-to-12.8.xlsx>

According to the analysis, the following facilities saw COVID increases in just a span of five days: Attica C.F., Bare Hill C.F., Bedford Hills C.F., Cayuga C.F., Clinton C.F., Gowanda C.F., Great Meadow C.F., Groveland C.F., Hudson C.F., Marcy C.F., Mohawk C.F. (Walsh Regional Medical Unit), Wende C.F., Woodbourne C.F., and Wyoming C.F.,

Late last month, Legal Aid condemned Governor Cuomo and DOCCS [for failing to promptly free vulnerable New Yorkers who qualify for New York's early release initiative](#) under which incarcerated individuals who are within 90 days of their release date and who are serving sentences for non-violent, non-sex offenses are eligible for immediate release. The State's failure to competently administer its early release initiative has [trapped hundreds of medically vulnerable people in a prison system overrun with a deadly pathogen.](#)

"With every passing day, positive COVID-19 cases continue to increase at prisons throughout the state. These are not isolated spikes, but a systemwide crisis impacting all DOCCS facilities," said **Stefen Short, Supervising Attorney with the Prisoners' Rights Project at The Legal Aid Society.** "This data clearly does not reflect the full scope of the crisis within New York State's prisons as DOCCS has routinely demonstrated its inability and refusal to ensure comprehensive and regular testing. We call on Governor Cuomo, DOCCS and Legislature leaders to release our clients who are vulnerable to COVID-19 immediately before more succumb to the virus."

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