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

***In Response to Heat and Water Failures at Two Rikers Island Facilities,
Legal Aid Calls on DOC to Immediately Remedy Outages As Colder
Weather Approaches***

***Outages Come Only Days After DOC Certified that Heat Systems Were
Fully Functioning***

(NEW YORK, NY) - The Legal Aid Society [condemned](#) the New York City Department of Correction (DOC) for failing to provide working heat and hot water to incarcerated New Yorkers at the George R. Vierno Center (GRVC) and Rose M. Singer Center (RMSC) facilities on Rikers Island, which have now been offline since Tuesday.

Pursuant to [Benjamin v. Molina](#) - litigation brought by Legal Aid concerning a broad range of inhumane conditions and practices plaguing the entire local jail system, including water system issues, overcrowding, fire risks, sanitation deficiencies and extreme temperatures - DOC is required to confirm that heat is in working order heading into the colder months and maintain the systems in working order.

Order language: *Prior to October 15 of each year, defendants shall inspect, test, and repair or replace to working order all heating systems and shall certify to the Court with copies to OCC and to plaintiffs' and defendants' counsel that these tasks have been completed. Defendants shall thereafter maintain these systems in working order.*

Not more than a week ago, DOC notified Legal Aid and the Court Monitor that heating systems were operational.

According to forecasts, temperatures will fall to the mid-40s tonight and heading into the weekend.

“Only days ago, DOC certified that heating systems at Rikers Island were functioning and ready for the imminent colder weather. That was clearly not the case,” said **Robert Quackenbush, staff attorney with the Prisoners’ Rights Project at The Legal Aid Society**. “These outages will compound the already deplorable conditions that our incarcerated clients needlessly suffer each day, and we demand that DOC bolster efforts to bring heat back online at these two facilities.”

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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 145 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