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

Joint NYC Defender Statement in Response to Mayor Adams' Address on New York City's Mental Health Crisis

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society, Brooklyn Defender Services, The Bronx Defenders, New York County Defender Services, and the Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem - New York City public defender organizations - issued the following joint statement in response to Mayor Eric Adams' address on the mental health crisis in New York City:

“We appreciate Mayor Adams holding this address to bring further attention to the mental health crisis facing so many New Yorkers, many of whom include the people we represent.

“We are heartened to hear that Mayor Adams acknowledges that community-based treatment and least-restrictive services must guide the path to rehabilitation and recovery. He is correct that homeless New Yorkers with mental health conditions have the right to health care, housing, treatment, respect, dignity and the hope that their futures will be safe and illnesses treated.

“Moreover, he is also correct that New York has experienced decades of dysfunction when it comes to caring for people who live with mental health diagnoses and that we must no longer be guided by fear, that Albany must no longer ‘punt’ and it should instead finally enact smart solutions to a human crisis.

“Pending legislation in Albany, the [Treatment Not Jail Act](#), offers a voluntary, court-based, structured, and proven-effective method of connecting those in the criminal legal system with underlying mental health issues with the treatment and services they need.

“Rather than jailing people with underlying mental illnesses and similar disorders, and then abandoning them to a chaotic and unsupported transition process when they are released into the community, mental health and drug treatment courts along with the accompanying robust community services they provide, lead to greater public health and public safety. People who successfully complete mental health or drug treatment courts have a substantially lower rate of re-arrest and meet other measures of success, such as continuing their education and obtaining employment.

“We ask City Hall to follow the facts, embrace a smart solution, and join us this coming legislative session in advocating for the swift passage of this transformative and vital bill.”

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