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Contact:

Audrey Martin

AMartin@legal-aid.org

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

Legal Aid Demands an Immediate Investigation Into the Death of Charizma Jones, a 23-Year-Old Who Died Shortly After Release from Rikers Island Where She Was Repeatedly Denied Medical Care

(NEW YORK, NY) - The Legal Aid Society sent a [letter](#) to the New York City Board of Correction (BOC) demanding an immediate investigation into the [death](#) of [Charizma Jones](#), a 23-year-old woman who suffered a medical emergency while in New York City Department of Correction (DOC) custody at Rikers Island and, after being repeatedly denied access to care by DOC officers, later died at a local hospital.

The letter states:

“Ms. Jones’ medical records reflect an egregious denial of access to medical care by DOC staff in the weeks before her death. Correction officers repeatedly blocked medical staff’s access to Ms. Jones, citing her “medlock” status. But no security status can justify isolating a person in custody and depriving them of all access to medical care. In Ms. Jones’ case, DOC’s actions were particularly appalling given that her symptoms were worsening and she was in obvious need of medical intervention and treatment.”

Ms. Jones was first admitted to the infirmary on April 28, 2024 with a rash and fever. Beginning on May 4th, DOC began to repeatedly interfere with the medical staff’s efforts to evaluate Ms. Jones, denying requests from medical staff to take her vital signs, stating that Ms. Jones could not be let out of her cell due to unspecified safety concerns.

On May 6th, DOC again denied medical staff access to take Ms. Jones’ vital signs and within an hour of the denial, EMS was called to take Ms. Jones to the hospital. Ms. Jones died in the hospital on July 14th.

Legal Aid’s letter demands the preservation of all evidence pertaining to Ms. Jones’ time in custody, including recent camera footage and audio footage, logbooks, and all records regarding Ms. Jones’ disciplinary status, and information on her placement in medlock and in RED ID status.

“It is deplorable that DOC used a security status to deny Ms. Jones the urgent medical attention she clearly required in the days preceding her death,” said **Veronica Vela, Supervising Attorney with the Prisoners’ Rights Project at The Legal Aid Society**. “We demand that BOC immediately conduct a comprehensive investigation into the circumstances surrounding Ms. Jones’ death, and for DOC to hold accountable — including through suspension or termination, if necessary — the officers responsible for contributing to yet another tragic death of an incarcerated New Yorker.”

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