

**THE
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BY EMAIL

Board of Correction
2 Lafayette Street
Suite 1221
New York, NY 10007

Re: Charizma Jones, RMSC, NYSID 15117662P, B&C 349230311

Board Members,

I write to ask that the Board of Correction initiate an immediate investigation into the recent death of Charizma Jones, who became ill while in Department of Correction (DOC) custody and passed away at Elmhurst Hospital on July 14, 2024, shortly after being released from custody. She was 23 years old.

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 serving a city sentence on Rikers Island. On April 16, 2024, she was placed under "RED ID" status after an alleged assault on staff. She was then twice admitted to the infirmary with a rash and fever; the first admission began on or around April 28 and lasted until May 2 or May 3. Although Ms. Jones was on medical isolation during this first infirmary stay, medical staff were able to visit her, take her vital signs, and administer medication. But shortly after her second admission on May 4, DOC began to repeatedly interfere with medical staff's efforts to evaluate Ms. Jones. DOC began denying all requests from medical staff to take Ms. Jones' vital signs, responding that Ms. Jones "cannot be out from her cell for safety reason." (CHS Records dated May 5, 2024, at p. 98). Medical staff tried at least five times to take Ms. Jones' vital signs on May 5, and each time DOC blocked their access to her. The following morning, on May 6, DOC again denied medical staff access to take Ms. Jones' vital signs. Within an hour of the May 6 denial, EMS was called to take Ms. Jones to the hospital, where she died.

We have serious concerns that DOC's actions denying Ms. Jones access to medical care contributed to her tragic death. DOC's use of a security status to deny urgent, or indeed *any* needed medical attention, is unacceptable. The BOC must conduct a swift investigation into the circumstances surrounding Ms. Jones' death to ensure transparency and accountability for DOC's actions.

We have sent DOC a preservation request asking for the preservation of all evidence regarding Ms. Jones' time in custody, including recent camera footage, audio footage, logbooks, and all records regarding Ms. Jones' disciplinary status and her placement in medlock and RED ID status. We hope that DOC will share all evidence in its possession with the Board and fully cooperate with the Board's efforts to hold accountable those responsible for contributing to another tragic death of an incarcerated New Yorker.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Veronica Vela
Supervising Attorney