

News from the Commission on Quality of Care and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities
Protecting, Advocating and Ensuring Quality of Life for People with Disabilities

Andrew Cuomo, Governor
Roger Bearden, Chair

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COC Appoints Members to Psychiatric Correctional Advisory Committee

The Commission on Quality of Care and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities has appointed five individuals to its new Psychiatric Correctional Advisory Committee. The panel will advise the Commission and its Chair, Roger Bearden, on the quality of mental health services in New York State correctional facilities, as well as ways those services can be improved.

Creation of the advisory committee is part of the Special Housing Unit (SHU) Exclusion Law, which recognizes the need to provide people who are incarcerated -- and who have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness -- with access to mental health treatment during their incarceration. In addition, it provides for the removal of inmates with serious mental illness from the extreme isolation of the Special Housing Units.

Those appointed to the new advisory committee include:

- Jack Beck of New York, NY -- Director of the Prison Visiting Project, Correctional Association;
- Charlie Giglio of Guilderland, NY -- former Deputy Director of the Bureau of Forensic Services, NYS Office of Mental Health;
- Stuart Grassian, M.D. of Boston, MA -- Psychiatrist, former faculty member of Harvard Medical School, and national expert on the psychiatric effects of solitary confinement;
- Martin Horn of New York, NY-- Distinguished Lecturer at John Jay College, former Commissioner of Correction in New York City, and former Secretary of Corrections of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania;
- Myra Hutchinson of New York, NY -- family member of a former inmate and member of the Mental Health Alternatives to Solitary Confinement (MHASC).

The committee will hold its first meeting in early February 2012.

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