



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Open Letter Demands Investigation Into Serious Deficiencies in Medical Care for People Detained by ICE at Hudson County Correctional Facility

New York, NY – January 17, 2018 – New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (“NYLPI”), a leading civil rights advocacy group for marginalized New Yorkers, announced today that it has submitted an open letter complaint detailing Hudson County Correctional Facility and ICE’s failure to provide adequate medical care and adequate discharge planning for NYLPI’s client, John Doe, who was confined to immigration detention at the facility from November 2014 through April 2015. Mr. Doe was diagnosed with cancer, approximately one full year after his initial complaint. NYLPI sent Mr. Doe’s letter complaint to federal and county officials, along with the private health care company working at the facility, because they share responsibility for providing medical care to people held in immigration detention at Hudson County Correctional Facility.

Mr. Doe is a man in his 40s who lived with HIV for years prior to his detention. Mr. Doe has a compromised immune system, and therefore an elevated risk of developing certain cancers, infections, and other illnesses because he is HIV-positive. Not long after he entered the facility, Mr. Doe began complaining of serious medical problems. However, it was not until approximately one year later that he was diagnosed with advanced cancer. Mr. Doe’s cancer progressed unchecked during this time, due to the facility’s extensive delays in diagnosis and treatment. Medical experts agree that it is better to identify and treat cancer at the earliest possible stage, and that any delays or interruptions in these processes may increase negative health outcomes.

Mr. Doe also did not receive adequate discharge planning, consistent with the severity of his cancer diagnosis, prior to his release from Hudson County Correctional. Discharge planning—a plan to ensure that medical care does not lapse upon release—is widely regarded as an essential component of medical care. Alarming, the facility’s failure to provide adequate discharge planning further delayed Mr. Doe’s ability to obtain cancer treatment following his release.

“The facility’s failure to provide Mr. Doe adequate medical care is appalling,” said NYLPI attorney Maureen Belluscio. “The progression of his cancer during that year has been detrimental to his health. We believe the various government agencies and contractors responsible for providing medical care at Hudson County Correctional hold joint responsibility for this harm.”

Each year, U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”) places hundreds of thousands of people in civil detention pending the outcome of immigration hearings to determine their eligibility to remain in the United States. Under federal contracts worth millions of dollars annually, Hudson County is required to house and provide medical care to people in detention.

“Mr. Doe’s case sheds a stark light on the systemic failure to provide sufficient medical care for people who are detained by ICE,” added Belluscio. “In the past few years, well over one hundred complaints concerning poor medical care have been submitted to Hudson County Correctional. This treatment is inhumane and unacceptable.”

In Mr. Doe’s open letter complaint, NYLPI makes recommendations based upon both the deficiencies in Mr. Doe’s medical care and medical records, and other evidence that people detained by ICE at Hudson County Correctional with serious medical conditions are routinely denied adequate medical care. These recommendations are addressed to a combination of ICE, Hudson County Correctional, and CFG Health Systems personnel. NYLPI’s recommendations include:

- Use alternatives to detention for individuals with existing serious medical conditions.
- Institute comprehensive oversight and monitoring procedures.
- Train responsible staff.
- Make major improvements to the facility’s provision of medical care and discharge planning.
- End ICE detention contracts with facilities that continue to provide inadequate medical care.

“These recommendations are based on a long history of incredibly poor medical care at ICE detention facilities and must be implemented quickly and fully,” said Belluscio. “It has been made abundantly clear that systemic reforms are the only way to address this serious, ongoing problem.”

Click [here](#) to read NYLPI’s open letter on behalf of John Doe. To read more about NYLPI’s advocacy on behalf of people housed in immigration detention, including a [report](#) released in February 2017 documenting the serious, often life-threatening, deficiencies in the medical care provided to people detained in New York City-area immigration detention facilities, visit www.nylpi.org

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