

NEW YORK STATE COMMISSION OF CORRECTION

In the Matter of the Death : FINAL REPORT OF THE
: NEW YORK STATE COMMISSION
of Joel Noonan, an inmate of : OF CORRECTION
the Anna M. Kross Center :
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TO: Commissioner Martin Horn
NYC Department of Correction
33 Beaver Street
New York, New York 10004

GREETINGS:

WHEREAS, the Medical Review Board has reported to the NYS Commission of Correction pursuant to Correction Law, section 47(1)(d), regarding the death of Joel Noonan who died on February 16, 2007 while an inmate in the custody of the NYC Department of Correction and hospitalized at the Bellevue Hospital Prison Ward, the Commission has determined that the following final report be issued.

FINDINGS:

1. Joel Noonan was a thirty-five year old white male who died on 2/16/07 from suicidal hanging on 2/5/07 while in the custody of the New York City Department of Correction (NYCDOC), and while hospitalized at the Bellevue Hospital Prison Ward Forensic Unit (19 North East).
2. Noonan was born on 2/10/70 in Boston, Massachusetts. His mother moved him and his siblings (three brothers and one sister) to Montana, when Noonan was a child. According to record, Noonan's mother died when he was five years old, and he and his siblings moved back to Boston to live with their father. Noonan's relationship with his father was allegedly stressful at best.
3. Noonan attended regular school. His grades were poor, especially when he began to use alcohol and cocaine. Noonan started using alcohol when he was ten years old, marijuana when he was twelve, and he was introduced to cocaine by one of his brothers when he was fifteen years old. He was involved in an auto accident when he was in the eleventh grade, which interrupted his education. Noonan obtained a GED during an incarceration, and also took several college-level courses in sociology, psychology, and history. Noonan was employed for short periods as a cook, landscaper, and roofer. Noonan was single and had no children.

4.



[REDACTED]

5.

[REDACTED]

6.

[REDACTED]

7.

[REDACTED]

8. Bellevue Hospital providers expressed their concern to the Commission regarding the lack of an open dialog and a good flow of communication between Prison Health Services, Inc., providers at Rikers Island, and the providers at Bellevue Hospital. It was the general opinion of all administration and clinical staff that an improved system of communication could only assist in providing improved coordination of care and better continuity of care between Rikers Island and in-patient services at Bellevue Hospital Ward 19 North West and 19 North East. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

9.

[REDACTED]

10.


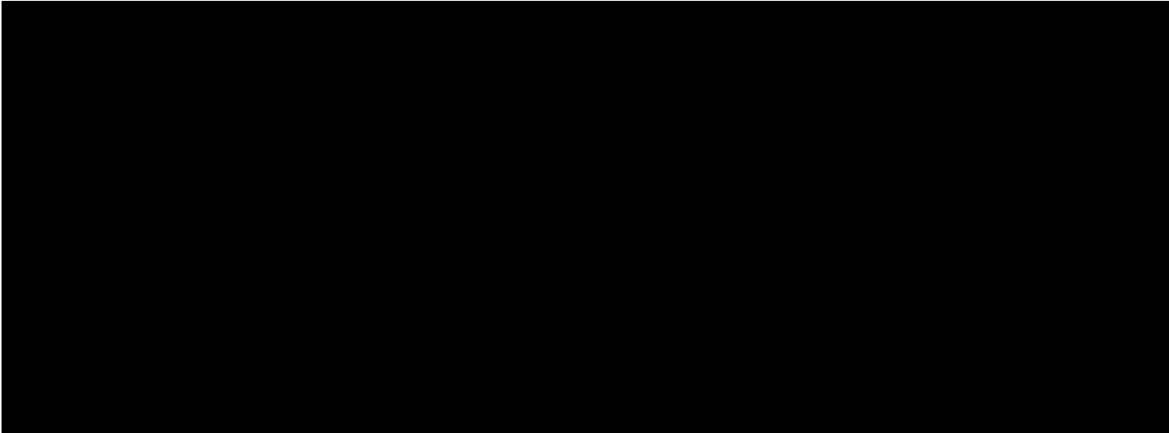
[REDACTED]

11.

[REDACTED]

12.

[REDACTED]

13. On 1/25/07, Noonan attended a scheduled court date without incident but appeared more tearful following his return. 
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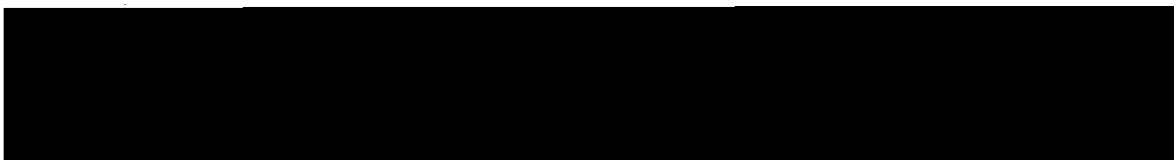
14. On Monday, 2/5/07, at approximately 3:15 a.m., Noonan was discovered in an unconscious state. Noonan had placed a torn sheet around his neck and secured it to the rear gate of the 19 North East Wing. This was outside of his room and directly down the corridor in front of his room. Noonan had exited his room, past the "D" security post which was not staffed at the time and preceded down the hall. Noonan then attached the sheet to the rear gate and around his neck.

15. Noonan was discovered by Correction Officer T.M., shield #15210, who was assigned to 19 North East "C" post and Mr. G., the psychiatric health technician, who was assigned to conduct fifteen minute tours of observation of the patient. The security log is maintained by one correction officer. The documentation is not completed by the officer(s) completing the round. This documentation is completed in the "A" officer log. Supervisory rounds on the night shift are made by hospital staff and generally not by corrections staff, a violation of 9 NYCRR §7003.3(j)(2) the name(s) of the facility staff conducting the supervision, and (j)(3) when active supervision is conducted, the date and time supervision is initiated and the date and time it ends.

16. Noonan was found in a slumped (appeared to be in a seated) position with his back to the gate. Officer T.M. immediately utilized his 911 rescue tool and cut the sheet off Noonan and laid him on the ground. Medical staff was summoned and immediately arrived providing emergency case (ACLS). The event is not clearly documented in the area log. A violation

of 9 NYCRR §7003.3(j) (6) any significant events and activities occurring during supervision, including; (i) the date and time of such event or problem, (ii) the names of all prisoners and/or staff involved, (iii) facility staff response to such event or problem, including a summary of what occurred, and (iv) a description of the condition of any prisoners involved.

17.



RECOMMENDATIONS:


TO THE COMMISSIONER OF THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION:

1. The Department shall comply with 9 NYCRR §7003.3 Supervision of prisoners in facility housing areas: (j) (2) the name(s) of facility staff conducting the supervision and (j) (3) when active supervision is conducted, the date and time supervision is initiated and the date and time it ends.
2. The Department shall comply with 9 NYCRR §7003.3 (j) (6) any significant events and activities occurring during supervision, including; (i) the date and time of such event or problem, (ii) the names of all prisoners and/or staff involved, (iii) facility staff response to such event or problem, including a summary of what occurred, and (iv) a description of the condition of any prisoners involved.
3. In accordance with 9 NYCRR §7041.1(a) (b), the Department shall maintain appropriate security staff coverage of all security posts within the Bellevue Hospital Ward and provide for meal coverage of all posts (A, B, C and D). Posts shall not be left unattended during meals or regularly scheduled breaks.
4. In accordance with 9 NYCRR §7003/3(a), the Department shall ensure that security staff rounds are completed by NYCDOC correction officers during all shifts on 19 North West and 19 North East units at Bellevue Hospital.

TO THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, DIVISION OF HEALTH CARE ACCESS AND IMPROVEMENT, NYC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE AND THE DIRECTOR OF NYC HEALTH AND HOSPITAL CORPORATION:

The Division should assist in the facilitation of improved communication between medical and mental health providers at Rikers Island facilities and the providers at Bellevue Hospital Prison Ward 19 North East (mental health) and 19 North West (medical) unit(s). Regularly scheduled meetings should be held between the clinical/administrative staff from PHS, Inc., Rikers Island and the medical and mental health providers on the Bellevue Hospital Prison Ward.

WITNESS, HONORABLE FREDERICK C. LAMY, Commissioner, NYS Commission of Correction, 80 Wolf Road, 4th Floor, in the City of Albany, New York 12205 this 20th day of June, 2008.


Frederick C. Lamy
Commissioner

FCL:mj

07-M-26

3/08

cc: Carolyn Thomas, Chief of Department
Roger Parris, Deputy Commissioner
of Strategic Planning and Programs
Eric Berliner, Executive Director
of Health Services
Florence A. Hutner, General Counsel
Mark Cranston, Deputy Chief of Staff
Louise Cohen, Deputy Commissioner
Correctional Health Services, NYC
Department of Health & Mental Hygiene
Robert Berding, Deputy Executive Director
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