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NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ESSEX COUNTY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY CIVILIAN TASK FORCE
SCHEDULES PUBLIC HEARINGS TO DISCUSS MEDICAL ISSUES
AT CORRECTIONAL FACILITY
*First Public Hearing is Scheduled on Saturday, October 3rd***

Essex County, NJ – The Essex County Correctional Facility Civilian Task Force has completed its training and has scheduled three public hearings concerning health and medical practices at the Correctional Facility. During the hearings, testimony about administrative practices and policy, incarcerated persons' relevant experiences and expert best practices will be gathered.

"The Civilian Task Force is pleased to schedule our first series of hearings and begin collecting public input about the Essex County Correctional Facility. Ensuring the safety and security of those at the ECCF are safe and secure is our paramount concern and we look forward to get started on this important work," said Civilian Task Force Chairman James McGreevey, Executive Director and Chairperson of the New Jersey Re-entry Corporation and former Governor of New Jersey.

Retired Chief Federal Judge Jose Linares, Executive Director of the Task Force, echoed Chairman, Governor McGreevey's statement and indicated that he "is looking forward to working with the Chairman and the members of the task force in this tremendously important project."

The first hearing will be held as follows:

Date: Saturday, October 3, 2020
Time: 10 a.m. to 12 noon
Place: New Jersey Reentry Corporation
936 Bergen Street
Newark, NJ

Subsequent hearings are scheduled for Thursday, November 12th from 6 to 8 p.m. and Saturday, December 5th from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Locations will be announced. These public hearings are planned as in-person events where social distancing guidelines will be followed and the wearing of face masks will be required.

Matters to be discussed will likely include grievance requests and policy, Family Share & HIV care, mental and behavioral health, clinical/medical, medication-assisted treatment, chronic conditions, health status, as well as other topics. Testimony of recent releaseses

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with experience interacting with the ECCF medical staff is of particular emphasis, especially those having experienced incarceration during the COVID-19 pandemic. A detailed agenda will be forthcoming.

Those wishing to contact the Civilian Task Force, submit a complaint or want more information about the public hearing should e-mail to JailTaskForce@admin.essexcountynj.org or call 973 877-8037. For more information about the Task Force, visit www.essexcountynj.org/corrections/ and click on the link for the "Civilian Task Force."

The Civilian Task Force conducted two days of training and orientation on Monday, August 17th and Thursday, August 27th. The sessions were led by McGreevey and Linares. The sessions included presentations about training procedures, safety and security protocols, inmates' and detainees' roles, responsibilities and rights, the differences between inmates and detainees, inmate and detainee grievance procedures, social services programs, the medical unit, food services, the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), internal affairs, and confidentiality and HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act).

The intent of the nine-member task force is to provide "transparency and accountability" of the ECCF staff, to protect the "lives, health, safety and rights of all people confined at the ECCF" and ensure the "conditions of their confinement are safe, sanitary, respectful and humane," according to language in the ordinance. It will act independently of County government and have the authority to inspect the ECCF, interview corrections officers, inmates, detainees, and review systematic issues and concerns.

Members of the Task Force were nominated by Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr. and appointed by the Board of Chosen Freeholders in June through an established advice and consent procedure that is used to fill vacancies on all county boards and commissions.

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