



**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20004**

Charles Allen
Councilmember, Ward 6
Chairperson
Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety

Committee Member
Business and Economic Development
Education
Transportation and the Environment

May 5, 2020

Kevin Donahue
Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Ste. 533
Washington, DC 20004

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dear Deputy Mayor Donahue:

As the Chairperson of the D.C. Council's Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety, I write regarding challenges faced by Unity Health Care ("Unity"), the non-profit health care provider that manages the District's correctional health care system.

As you know, in recognition of the public health challenges associated with responding to COVID-19 within secure facilities, the Council recently enacted emergency legislation to reduce the incarcerated population in the custody of the Department of Corrections ("DOC"). In combination with other measures taken by the Executive, the Superior Court, the U.S. Parole Commission, prosecutors, and defense counsel, we have already seen significant reductions in the average daily census at DOC facilities, and I expect this trend to continue. This, of course, is good news and will save lives.

I want to draw your attention to the impacts of the reduced incarcerated population on Unity. Unity's contract with DOC is funded, in part, on the average per-member, per-day census. Therefore, as the census declines, the financial sustainability of the correctional health care system is jeopardized. Under normal circumstances, fewer patients might justify a lower reimbursement level. However, during this public health crisis, incarcerated individuals in DOC's custody require a greater level of care and more equipment and supplies. In addition, Unity's contract includes a ceiling on the total reimbursement for in-patient hospitalization costs. This contractual threshold could easily be exceeded due to the infection rate and transmissibility of COVID-19. Furthermore, cuts to Unity's funding and the resulting personnel reductions could immediately affect our efforts to improve the conditions of confinement in response to pending litigation and cause lasting damage to the District's ability to provide comprehensive health care to our incarcerated residents.

Accordingly, I request that you review Unity's contract and consider possible additional support to ensure that our correctional health care system remains able to meet the heightened needs presented by the current public health crisis, as well as future needs. Such support could include revisiting the existing reimbursement limitations and making appropriate resources available to properly treat residents who require in-patient hospitalization.

It is vital that our correctional facilities maintain service with a non-profit health care provider with a robust network of community-based facilities. Thank you in advance for your attention and partnership in protecting the health of the District's incarcerated individuals. I welcome an opportunity to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charles Allen", with a stylized, flowing script.

Charles Allen, Ward 6 Councilmember
Chairperson, Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety

Cc: Councilmembers, Council of the District of Columbia
Wayne Turnage, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services
Quincy Booth, Director, Department of Corrections
Clinton Lacey, Director, Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services