Sing Sing Correctional Facility
Humane Alternatives to Long-Term Solitary Confinement (HALT)
Final Compliance and Quality of Care Review
JC#: 77010178386

On August 28, 2025, the Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs (the Justice Center) conducted a site visit at the Sing Sing Correctional Facility (CF) to review the programs, treatment and conditions of confinement for incarcerated individuals placed in residential rehabilitation unit in that facility. The Justice Center also assessed compliance with the implementation of the HALT Act.[1]

The Justice Center reviewed policies and practices concerning:

a) Placement of persons in segregated confinement and residential rehabilitation units (RRU);
b) Placement and treatment of persons meeting the "special population" definition in the HALT Act;[2]
c) Length of time spent in segregated confinement or residential rehabilitation units;
d) Hearings and procedures;
e) Assessments and rehabilitation plans, procedures and discharge determinations.

The Justice Center toured the Special Housing Unit (SHU) and Residential Rehabilitation Unit (RRU) and spoke with four incarcerated individuals who were in SHU and 14 who were housed in the RRU.[3] In addition to reviewing the OMH clinical case record and DOCCS guidance record, the Movement Logs and Programming Logs, the Justice Center also requested any Exceptional Circumstances documentation for a time-period of six months.[4] The Justice Center's review found that there were no individuals placed on exceptional circumstances during this review period.

To complete a thorough evaluation, Justice Center staff requested private interviews in the SHU and RRU, and11 incarcerated individuals accepted.[5] The interviews were conducted in a private setting at the Sing Sing CF. The Justice Center also distributed 18 surveys to solicit information about programming, recreation, and tablet use in segregated confinement and three surveys were returned at the time of this report. The Justice Center's findings, recommendations and requests follow below.

---

[1] Correction Law §§137(6)(d)(e) (h), (i), (j), (k), (l), (m), (n), and (o) and §§138 (7), 401-a.
[2] Section 2 of the Correction Law, subdivision 33 defines Special Population as any person twenty-one years of age or younger; fifty-five years or older; with a disability; pregnant, in the first 8 weeks of post-partum recovery or caring for a child in a correctional facility.
[3] At the time of our visit there was one incarcerated individual in the infirmary which we did not meet with.
[4] February 28, 2025, to August 28, 2025
[5] Eight individuals were housed in the RRU and three in the SHU.

Justice Center Findings:

Treatment and Conditions:

1. **There were no incarcerated individuals participating in out of cell programming in the SHU at the time of the site visit.**

   The Sing Sing CF SHU consists of 15 cells on the "1 gallery". The census in the SHU at the time of the Justice Center's site visit was five incarcerated individuals. The programming area was located on the "2 gallery" where there are 12 Reduced Security Therapy and Recreation Table (RESTART) chairs in a line formation. At the entrance interview, DOCCS executive staff explained that programming had not resumed in the Sing Sing SHU since the job action had concluded, due to lack of civilian and security staff. In addition, due to restricted movement during the job action, the programming gallery had been used to house incarcerated individuals in the SHU. Programming in the SHU was scheduled to begin the first week of September 2025.

   According to the SHU log books, tablets are provided to individuals for 4-5 hours per day, however the timing that they are passed out varies. Justice Center staff learned during private interviews that individuals have access to the static tablet for four hours each evening, which can be used to make phone calls.

   Per the Justice Center's request, the DOCCS response stated that programming in the Sing Sing CF SHU resumed on September 2, 2025, and is offered Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. In addition, attendance records were submitted for September 2025. The records indicate there were 19 days with recorded program attendance, including five weekend days. There were three days recorded as "no programs", two days with no attendance and three days were left blank. The highest participation was nine individuals on three separate dates.[6] It should be noted of the recorded program attendance days; the average participation was 5.8 individuals which is commendable for SHU programming.

   Attendance records for SHU programming in March 2026 were not submitted with the response.

2. **There were no incarcerated individuals participating in out of cell programming in the RRU at the time of the site visit.**

   The Sing Sing CF RRU consists of 15 cells on the "3 gallery." The census in the RRU at the time of the Justice Center's site visit was 14 incarcerated individuals. The programming area was located on the "4 gallery" where there are 8 RESTART chairs in a line formation. The Justice Center learned that like in the SHU, programming in the RRU had not resumed since the job action. Reasons identified by DOCCS were lack of civilian and security staff. Programming in the RRU was also scheduled to begin the second week in September 2025.

[6] September 21, 2025, September 24, 2025, September 29, 2025

Per the RRU logbooks, tablets are provided to the individuals for 4-5 hours per day, however the timing that they are passed out varies. Justice Center staff were informed during private interviews that incarcerated individuals have access to the static tablet for four hours each evening, which can be used to make phone calls.

According to the documentation provided, programming in the Sing Sing CF RRU resumed on September 9, 2025, and is offered Monday through Friday in the morning from 7:45 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. (Group B) and the afternoon from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Group A). Attendance records submitted for September 2025 with the response demonstrate six recorded program days. The highest morning attendance was five individuals.[7] The lowest recorded participants were two individuals for two days.[8] The highest recorded afternoon attendance was two days, with four individuals.[9] The afternoon lowest recorded attendance was three days, where only two individuals attended.[10]

In March 2026, there were 12 recorded days of programming in the RRU. The highest morning attendance was for two days and recorded five individuals[11]. The lowest morning program attendance was two individuals for two days.[12] For the afternoon, the highest recorded afternoon attendance was for two days recording five individuals[13] The lowest afternoon attendance was two days recording two individuals[14].

Request:

According to the information provided to the Justice Center and staff observations, programming at the Sing Sing SHU and RRU had not been offered to individuals in the SHU or the RRU due to the DOCCS job action which ended on March 10, 2025.

3. **The Justice Center did not receive the complete program orientation manuals for the SHU or RRU.[15]**

To complete a comprehensive review, the most recent program orientation manual was requested to ensure consistent outlined procedures for the individuals assigned to those programs. Following the Justice Center's request, only a partial program manual (pages 1-14) for the RRU was provided for review.

[7] September 9, 2025
[8] September 16, 2025, and September 24, 2025
[9] September 10, 2025, and September 16, 2025
[10] September 17, 2025, September 23, 2025, September 24, 2025
[11] March 19, 2025, and March 26, 2025
[12] March 2, 2025, and March 9, 2025
[13] March 19, 2025, and March 30, 2025
[14] March 10, 2025, and March 12, 2025
[15] The program manuals were requested via the Justice Center records request on August 29, 2025

Per the Justice Center's May 12, 2026, request, DOCCS again provided a partial program manual for the RRU (pages 1-14) and no SHU program manual. A Sing Sing Orientation Manual was provided however; it does not reference the SHU or RRU housing units.

4. **The Sing Sing CF provides congregate recreation in the SHU and RRU.**

   Facility staff reported that SHU and RRU recreation is offered for two to three hours each day. The SHU has access to eight outdoor recreation pens. Four of the recreation pens have basketball hoops and the others have a pull up bar. There were no incarcerated individuals participating in recreation during our tour of the SHU.

   The RRU has one large congregate recreation pen with a pull up bar and basketball hoop. There were three incarcerated individuals participating in recreation during our tour of the area.

   During private interviews with Justice Center staff, individuals reported that recreation is offered although some said that they chose not to go. The reasons provided for not attending included "they don't want to socialize", "depends on the weather", and "doesn't like people". Individuals who do attend recreation stated that it is usually in the morning hours for at least two-three hours, and that they attend because "they are with other people", "enjoy working out with the pull up bar and basketball", and "walking around and talking to people".

5. **The Justice Center received three programming and recreation surveys out of the 17 that were distributed to incarcerated individuals at the Sing Sing CF.**

   According to the survey responses received, all three individuals reported that they are never offered program, so they have never attended. One individual indicated they were aware that they were unable to attend Alcohol and Substance Abuse Treatment (ASAT) or Anger Replacement Therapy (ART) programming while in the RRU and two of the responding individuals noted they would like to be able to take ASAT and ART. They all indicated recorded that they receive the tablets for two to four hours per day. According to the responses, the individuals are offered two to four hours of congregate recreation daily in both the morning and afternoon. Only one individual reported attending and the others responded that it was either too cold or too hot to stay outside for up to three hours. In addition, one individual liked congregate recreation while another would rather attend recreation alone.

6. **Incarcerated Individuals do not have access to the law library tablet.**

   The Justice Center learned during their site visit that individuals do not have access to law library tablets as the Westlaw app utilized for law library services is currently not working, which has been confirmed by DOCCS. A review of the

logbooks for the period of May 7, 2025, to May 21, 2025, shows legal mail rounds were made nine times.

Request:

According to the Washington CF DOCCS response on December 11, 2025, facilities are moving towards allowing individuals to keep their general population tablets with appropriate restrictions. Please provide an update on this transition and whether it is being implemented at Sing Sing CF.

Special Populations:

7. **At the time of the Justice Center's visit, there was no one under the age of 21, over the age of 55, pregnant or with any disability in the SHU. There were, however, two incarcerated individuals with a diagnosed mental illness on the mental health caseload in the SHU.**

- Incarcerated individual 1, a mental health service level (MHSL) 1, is diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and antisocial personality disorder.[16] They were admitted to the OMH caseload on August 8, 2025 as a MHSL 3, following a referral by DOCCS related to the individual feeling hopeless, starting a fire in their cell, and their statement that "people out to get me". On August 16, 2025, they were admitted to the RCTP after they reported they were suicidal after receiving a bad phone call. The individual reported they were not happy in PC and wanted "to go to the box". On August 19, 2025, they were discharged reporting they were "ok" and wanted to go back to their housing unit. The individual received a Tier III ticket on August 26, 2025, after they refused to lock into their cell and assaulted an officer when they struck them with a right closed fist to the chin and neck. After the incident they were found to be in possession of a weapon. The metal ice pick type weapon, measuring approximately 7 ½ x 1/8 inch, was sharpened to a point on one end with a white cloth on the other end forming a handle. Their MHSL designation was changed from 3 to 1 on August 27, 2025.

- Incarcerated individual 2, a MHSL 1, is diagnosed of adjustment disorder with depression and cannabis use disorder. [17] During the Justice Center's review period, the individual is documented as being impulsive, overreactive to their environment. On May 12, 2025, they reported to the psychiatrist that they had brought a razor to OMH because they wanted "wanted to go to SHU, my best friend is there". They also reported that "they keep sending me back to my cell". The individual reported frustration on July 30, 2025, while in general population, stating they were having problems with officers and hearing voices even though they were compliant with medications. According to a DOCCS August 19, 2025 Unusual Incident Report, the individual

[16] [redacted] (DIN # [redacted]) is hereinafter referred to as incarcerated individual 1
[17] [redacted] (DIN # [redacted]) is hereinafter referred to as incarcerated individual 2

approached a sergeant in the infirmary and requested to be seen by OMH. The individual then reported to a OMH social worker that they were in possession of a weapon. They surrendered the weapon, a "1 ¾ by ¼ silver metal razor blade wrapped in clear plastic at one end for a handle", to an officer. During the individual's intake assessment, they denied having any concerns.

Request and Recommendation:

Segregated confinement poses serious risks to a person's mental health. The Justice Center recommends that those with ongoing mental health needs be diverted as soon as possible from segregated confinement and placed in programs that have ongoing therapeutic and beneficial programming.

The Justice Center also requests an update on incarcerated individuals 1 and 2. This update should include the individual's MHSL, housing status, current confinement sanctions, any additional misbehavior reports or tickets, and the number of times the individuals were transferred to the RCTP.

Length of time spent in segregated confinement:

8. **All incarcerated individuals in the SHU were held for less than 15-consecutive days or 20-days in a 60-day period in segregated confinement.**

Hearings and procedures:

9. **Per HALT training documents received, a total of 19 staff is up to date with Tier III officer training.**

10. **Incarcerated individual 2's August 19, 2025, disciplinary hearing packet was not provided for review.**

    Per the DOCCS response, thank you for providing the disciplinary hearing packet.

Assessments, rehabilitation plans and discharge procedures

11. **Incarcerated individual 3 was documented by OMH as being housed in the SHU when they were in the RRU.[18]**

    Per the DOCCS guidance records, incarcerated individual 3, a MHSL 6, was housed in the RRU on June 5, 2025, and July 2, 2025. When mental health staff conducted 30-day SHU/RRU Mental Health Assessment on both dates with the individual, the forms were checked that the individual was housed in the SHU.

[18] [redacted] (DIN #[redacted]) is hereinafter referred to as incarcerated individual 3

Request and Recommendation:

Please clarify if this was a clerical error or the incarcerated individual was still in the SHU for their 30-day mental health interviews. If it was determined that this was a clerical error, OMH staff should be retrained to ensure that the SHU/RRU Mental Health Assessment is completed with accuracy.

12. Incarcerated individual 4, a MHSL 1, had similar narratives on their SHU/RRU Mental Health interviews.[19]

Between June 20, 2025, and August 28, 2025, incarcerated individual 4 had four admissions to the Residential Crisis Treatment Program (RCTP) due to thoughts of self-harm.[20] During the admissions they presented either to have feces smeared on their chest, "I was going to cut up", wanted to "stay in OBS until my mind is clear", "I want to hurt myself because of my history", and "refuses to give up object he used to hurt himself".

According to the individual's SHU/RRU Mental Health interviews, they refused private interviews in the RRU between July 21, 2025 and August 25, 2025 and had to be evaluated cell side.[21] Even though they had presented with specific concerns during their admissions to the RCTP, each contact had a recommendation of "Patient seen due to DOCCS referral, Pt presented at baseline disheveled and paranoid delusion about not eating due to cl believing that his food being poisoned. Pt was otherwise calm, polite, alert and oriented X3, answering writer's questions appropriately. Pt was encouraged to make some improvement regarding his ADLS, pt agreed."

No further mental health information was documented in the interviews and there was no mention of their recent RCTP admissions.

Request and Recommendation:

The Justice Center recommends that OMH staff be retrained to ensure all clinical assessments accurately capture observations and relevant details that explain interactions on an individual basis. This is especially imperative providing the individual's MHSL and the number of times they required a crisis admission to the RCTP.

In addition, please provide the Justice Center with an update regarding incarcerated individual 4. This update should include the individual's MHSL, housing status, current confinement sanctions, any additional misbehavior reports or tickets, and the number of times the individuals were transferred to the RCTP.

[19] [redacted] (DIN #[redacted]) is hereinafter referred to as incarcerated individual 4

[20] June 20, 2025, June 24, 2025, and July 9, 2025, and August 27, 2025

[21] SHU/RRU Mental Health Interview Intake July 21, 2025, SHU/RRU Mental Health Interview 7-day July 28, 2025, SHU/RRU Mental Health Interview 30-day August 25, 2025.

13. **Of the 104 SHU/RRU Mental Health Interviews completed during the Justice Center's review period, only two interviews were completed during a private call out.[22]**

According to the documentation provided, 81 SHU/RRU Mental Health Interviews indicated that incarcerated individuals "Refused" a private interview. It was indicated on 11 forms that interviews could not be completed privately due to DOCCS staffing or during the job action. One could not be offered a private interview due to an unspecified "safety concern".

Request and Recommendation:

A private interview is considered the cornerstone of a clinical assessment to assist in establishing trust, emotional safety, and the confidentiality to share sensitive information. Without privacy, an individual may not make a full disclosure, leading to incomplete assessments, inaccurate diagnoses, or ineffective treatment plans.

The Justice Center requests an explanation of why only 2 incarcerated individuals, or 1.9% of the SHU/RRU Mental Health interviews that were completed for 20 individuals in the sample, engaged in a private interview with clinical staff. In addition, given the low number of private interviews accepted, the Justice Center recommends that the OMH Unit Chief complete quality assurance checks to monitor how many individuals are being offered and accept a private interview.

14. **Three incarcerated individuals have an excess of 365 days or more of SHU time.**

- Incarcerated individual 5, a MHSL 1, is diagnosed with borderline personality disorder.[23] They currently have disciplinary confinement sanctions that will not expire until February 23, 2027. All their disciplinary tickets since January 2024 were for weapons and contraband.[24]

- Incarcerated individual 3, a MHSL 6, has disciplinary confinement sanctions that will not expire until August 6, 2027. Their most recent disciplinary ticket was in April 2025 when they were found in possession of a weapon consisting of an altered pen with a piece of white cloth wrapped around one end to form a handle.

- Incarcerated individual 6, a MHSL 3, is diagnosed with antisocial personality disorder.[25] They have disciplinary confinement sanctions through June 2, 2027, and a loss of packages and commissary through June 23, 2029.

[22] Based on the 20 incarcerated individuals reviewed in the Justice Center's sample.
[23] [redacted] (DIN #[redacted]) is hereinafter referred to as incarcerated individual 5
[24] January 10, 2024, May 21, 2024, and April 8, 2025
[25] [redacted] (DIN #[redacted]) is hereinafter referred to as incarcerated individual 6

According to the documentation provided, the individual received eight Tier 3 tickets between March 16, 2025, and July 17, 2025.

Request:

The Justice Center recommends that DOCCS Central Office complete a guidance review of the three individuals and provide a justification explaining their extensive confinement sanctions. Within the justification, please include when they entered their confinement, their current release date from sanctions, if they have received any additional Tier III tickets, and how many days each person has received in time cuts.

Lastly, the Justice Center requests all independent reviews that were completed by the DOCCS Commissioner and the Commissioner of Mental Health or their designees approving the continuation for everyone's confinement per the HALT Act.

A six-month review of DOCCS and OMH records often includes records of treatment that an incarcerated individual received at another correctional facility before being transferred to the correctional facility reviewed. The findings below do not pertain to the Sing Sing CF:

15. Incarcerated individual 5, a MHSL 1, spent 33 days in the Clinton CF SHU.

Incarcerated individual 5 received a Tier III ticket on April 8, 2025, after they admitted to security that they were in possession of a weapon. A green toothbrush sharpened at one end measuring 6 inches long by ½ in wide was recovered. Per the documentation received by the Justice Center, they did not transfer to the Clinton CF SHU until May 9, 2025. They received mental health evaluations while still housed in the SHU at the Clinton CF on May 12, 2025, May 19, 2025, and June 11, 2025.

Request:

The Justice Center requests an explanation as to why the individual was not moved from the Clinton CF SHU within the appropriate timeframe as per the HALT Act.

16. Incarcerated Individual 7 spent over 60 days confined in SHU at the Midstate CF. [26]

The individual was transferred to the Midstate CF SHU on March 23, 2025, after receiving a Tier III ticket for violent conduct, creating disturbance and threats. They received four SHU/RRU Mental Health interviews all indicating they were housed in the SHU while their "SHU Sentence: Pending".[27] The DOCCS

[26] [redacted] (DIN #[redacted]) is hereinafter referred to as incarcerated individual 7

[27] March 24, 2025, March 31, 2025, April 8, 2025, and April 28, 2025

Chronological Entry Sheet indicates that the individual arrived at the Sing Sing RRU on May 27, 2025.

Request:

The Justice Center requests an explanation as to why the individual was not moved from the Midstate CF SHU within the appropriate timeframe as per the HALT Act.

17. **Incarcerated individual 6 was not offered a SHU/RRU Mental Health interview within the appropriate timeframe as per the HALT Act while housed at the Upstate CF.**

According to the individual's SHU/RRU Mental Health interview, signed and dated on March 13, 2025, "NA-sched. 3/13/25" was written in for the date and time of the interview and "unable to be seen due to DOCCS staffing emergency" was written in the recommendation section. There is no documentary evidence that the individual was seen for their 90-day evaluation until April 8, 2025, after an "immediate referral (letter wrote)" where they were questioning their value and life and had "themes of hopelessness" in their writing. The interaction resulted in MHSL level change from a 6 to a 4 active screen to be screened for mental health services.

Request:

The Justice Center requests an explanation as to why the individual was not seen in for their SHU/RRU Mental Health interview within the appropriate timeframe as per the HALT Act.

Review conducted by: _____
Jessica Loomis, Facility Review Specialist

NEW YORK STATE | Office of Mental Health

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

ANN MARIE T. SULLIVAN, M.D.
Commissioner

June 19, 2026

Jody Signoracci
Deputy Director of Outreach, Prevention and Support
Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs
161 Delaware Avenue
Delmar, New York 12054

Dear Ms. Signoracci:

We received your letter dated 5/12/26, in response to the Justice Center's 8/28/25 site visit of the Sing Sing Correctional Facility (CF) Special Housing Unit (SHU) and Residential Rehabilitation Unit (RRU) to review the quality of mental health care provided to incarcerated individuals and determine compliance with the Humane Alternatives to Long-Term Solitary Confinement (HALT) legislation, the Office of Mental Health's (OMH) policies, and the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision's (DOCCS) directives.

OMH responses were not requested or required for the recommendations associated with Findings #1-6, 8-10, and 15-16. Below are OMH's responses to the pertinent findings.

Recommendation and Request for Finding #7:
"…The Justice Center also requests an update on incarcerated individuals 1 and 2. This update should include the individual's MHSL [Mental Health Service Level], housing status, current confinement sanctions, any additional misbehavior reports or tickets, and the number of times the individuals were transferred to the RCTP [Residential Crisis Treatment Program]."

OMH Response:
OMH continues to work with DOCCS to ensure all incarcerated individuals on the mental health caseload are appropriately housed not only in accordance with their diagnoses and MHSL, but also in accordance with their assessed treatment needs. Pursuant to policy, OMH offers callouts to individuals who remain in SHU for 15 days or less. If needed, OMH offers additional callouts beyond those required by policy. All individuals, regardless of caseload status, are also assessed cell-side during regular rounds.

Incarcerated individual 1 remains a MHSL 1. He transferred from the Sing Sing CF SHU to the Auburn CF RRU from 9/11/25-4/6/26, at which time he transferred to Auburn CF's General Population (GP). On 4/24/26, he transferred to Elmira CF's Protective Custody (PC) where he continues to reside. Since the Justice Center's visit, he has required two RCTP admissions for thoughts of self-harm and psychiatric decompensation (9/19/25 and 4/26/26-5/14/26). During his most recent admission, he revealed to staff that he continued to be concerned for his safety, even in PC and was struggling with auditory hallucinations. Throughout his RCTP stay, he was able to work with the team to adjust his medication as needed and process his security concerns with DOCCS. He was able to release from the RCTP back to PC on 5/14/26.

Incarcerated individual 2 remains a MHSL 1. He transferred from the Sing Sing CF SHU to the Attica CF RRU from 9/4/25-11/24/25, at which time he transferred to Attica CF's GP. On 1/27/26, he transferred to Five Points CF's GP where he continues to reside. He has not required RCTP admission since 2017.

OMH defers to DOCCS regarding information on any additional misbehavior reports these individuals may have received.

Request and Recommendation for Finding #11:
"Please clarify if this was a clerical error or the incarcerated individual was still in the SHU for their 30-day mental health interviews. If it was determined that this was a clerical error, OMH staff should be retrained to ensure that the SHU/RRU Mental Health Assessment is completed with accuracy."

OMH Response:
This was a clerical error. OMH staff are regularly reminded of the need to ensure all documentation is accurate.

Request and Recommendation for Finding #12:
"The Justice Center recommends that OMH staff be retrained to ensure all clinical assessments accurately capture observations and relevant details that explain interactions on an individual basis. This is especially imperative providing the individual's MHSL and the number of times they required a crisis admission to the RCTP.

In addition, please provide the Justice Center with an update regarding incarcerated individual 4. This update should include the individual's MHSL, housing status, current confinement sanctions, any additional misbehavior reports or tickets, and the number of times the individuals were transferred to the RCTP."

OMH Response:
The Unit Chief and pertinent Social Work Supervisor have reviewed this with the clinician.

Incarcerated individual 4 received an S-designation on 1/13/26. That same day, he was transferred to Central New York Psychiatric Center (CNYPC) inpatient services. On 2/18/26, he was discharged from CNYPC into the Marcy Residential Mental Health Unit (RMHU) where he continues to reside. Since the Justice Center's visit, he has required 14 RCTP admissions for thoughts of self-harm, psychiatric decompensation, or non-suicidal self-injurious (NSSI) behavior. His last admission was from 4/13/26-4/14/26 due to expressing thoughts to self-harm. The treatment team continues helping him develop positive coping skills and find alternative ways to deal with other incarcerated individuals that does not involve isolating himself in RCTP. Since his last RCTP admission, the team has commended him for his progress in this, as evidenced by him no longer utilizing the RCTP since 4/14/26, not engaging in any further NSSI, and not accruing any misbehavior reports since 2/24/26.

Request and Recommendation for Finding #13:
"…The Justice Center requests an explanation of why only 2 incarcerated individuals, or 1.9% of the SHU/RRU Mental Health interviews that were completed for 20 individuals in the sample, engaged in a private interview with clinical staff. In addition, given the low number of private interviews accepted, the Justice Center recommends that the OMH Unit Chief complete quality assurance checks to monitor how many individuals are being offered and accept a private interview."

OMH Response:
There are numerous reasons incarcerated individuals might refuse to attend, or cannot attend, their mental health callouts. Common reasons shared with OMH staff have been: they do not want to have to be cuffed to come out for the callout; they feel safer and less vulnerable staying in their cell; they feel that because OMH completes SHU/RRU rounds, there is already regular contact with OMH and no need to come out for a private callout; they in general do not want to speak with OMH; or they are having issues with security staff and want to avoid further conflict by coming out of their cell. Other logistical barriers to completing private callouts are the ongoing DOCCS staffing issues and lack of escort staff; security issues that require DOCCS to halt movement on the galleries; and that some of the cited callouts in this finding occurred during the DOCCS job action.

OMH staff cannot force incarcerated individuals to leave their cells, nor can they control whether DOCCS stops movement on the housing unit. Nevertheless, OMH recognizes the importance of out-of-cell interviews and makes every effort to encourage patients to have private assessments.

Request for Finding #14:
"…The Justice Center also requests any SHU/RRU Mental Health interviews and/or clinical contacts that OMH has had with the three individuals since August 28, 2025."

OMH Response:
The requested documentation is enclosed with this response. Please note the documentation includes protected health information and should not be redisclosed.

Request for Finding #17:
"The Justice Center requests an explanation as to why the individual was not seen in for their SHU/RRU Mental Health interview within the appropriate timeframe as per the HALT Act."

OMH Response:
OMH would like to make clear that, due to being an active mental health caseload patient, incarcerated individual 6 was being assessed monthly while in the Upstate CF RRU; more than required per the HALT Act for a Level 3 facility. Prior to the cited 3/13/25 callout, he had been assessed cellside on 1/17/25 and 2/17/25 (notes are enclosed with this response). After this point, due to the DOCCS job action, staff were unable to regularly assess individuals or necessarily schedule individuals in accordance with the missed callout policy. As the clinician responsible no longer works for OMH, we cannot verify the exact circumstances surrounding these callouts.

Sincerely,

Li-Wen Lee, M.D.
Associate Commissioner
Division of Forensic Services

cc: Danielle Dill, Psy.D., Executive Director, CNYPC
William Vertoske, Deputy Director, Corrections Based Operations, CNYPC
File

NEW YORK STATE | Department of Corrections and Community Supervision

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor
DANIEL F. MARTUSCELLO III
Commissioner

June 24, 2026

Jody Signoracci
Deputy Director, Office of Outreach, Prevention & Support
NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs
161 Delaware Avenue
Delmar, NY 12054

Sing Sing Correctional Facility
Humane Alternatives to Long-Term Solitary Confinement (HALT)
Draft Compliance and Quality of Care Review
JC#: 77010178386

Dear Deputy Director Signoracci:

This is in response to the New York State Justice Center's visit at the Sing Sing Correctional Facility on August 28, 2025, to review the quality of corrections-based mental health programs, treatment, and conditions of confinement for incarcerated individuals placed in Special Housing Unit (SHU) and Residential Rehabilitation Unit (RRU) in that facility in accordance with the HALT Legislation, OMH policies, and DOCCS directives.

1. There were no incarcerated individuals participating in out-of-cell programming in the SHU and RRU at the time of the site visit.

2. Request:

According to the information provided to the Justice Center and staff observations, programming at the Sing Sing SHU and RRU had not been offered to individuals in the SHU or the RRU due to the DOCCS job action which ended on March 10, 2025. To ensure that the specific programming requirements under HALT are offered to individuals in the SHU and RRU, please provide the Justice Center with the exact date that programming began in both programs and the attendance records for September 2025. In addition, please forward the current program schedule and attendance records for March 2026.

Response:

Due to the DOCCS job action which ended on March 10, 2025, programming in SHU and RRU was temporarily halted. Due to staffing issues, programming resumed in RRU on September 9, 2025, and is offered in the AM and PM. The current program schedule for RRU is Monday through Friday from 7:45 am to 10:45 am (Group B) and 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm (Group A).

We have attached for your review the requested program attendance records for September 2025 and March 2026 for the RRU.

Programming resumed in SHU on September 2, 2025, and is offered Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 11:00 am. We have attached the requested SHU program attendance records for September 2025 and March 2026 for your review.

3. Request:

The Justice Center requests that the program orientation manuals for the SHU and RRU be forwarded for review.

Response:

We have attached the program orientation manuals for SHU and RRU for your review.

4. The Sing Sing Correctional Facility provides congregate recreation in the SHU and RRU.

5. The Justice Center received three (3) programming and recreation surveys out of the 17 that were distributed to incarcerated individuals at the Sing Sing Correctional Facility.

6. Request:

According to the Washington Correctional Facility DOCCS response on December 11, 2025, facilities are moving towards allowing individuals to keep their general population tablets with appropriate restrictions. Please provide an update on this transition and whether it is being implemented at Sing Sing Correctional Facility.

Response:

At Sing Sing Correctional Facility, incarcerated individuals with disciplinary sanctions who are housed in SHU and RRU are allowed to keep their general population tablets with appropriate restrictions.

7. Request and Recommendation:

Segregated confinement poses serious risks to a person's mental health. The Justice Center recommends that those with ongoing mental health needs be diverted as soon as possible from segregated confinement and placed in programs that have ongoing therapeutic and beneficial programming.

The Justice Center also requests an update on incarcerated individuals 1 and 2. This update should include the individual's MHSL, housing status, current confinement sanctions, any additional misbehavior reports or tickets, and the number of times the individuals were transferred to the RCTP.

Response:

DOCCS continues to divert every individual that is considered special population to a facility with access to therapeutic programming in accordance with the HALT Legislation. Not all individuals on the OMH caseload meet the definition of special population, therefore, can be placed in the SHU for a timeframe not to exceed 15 days as per the HALT legislation.

Furthermore, Senate Bill S4621 was introduced to expand the definition of persons with disability for purposes of the definition of special populations. The proposal was to include all individuals on the OMH caseload; however, this bill was vetoed by the Governor.

Incarcerated individual 1 is currently housed in the protective custody unit at Elmira Correctional Facility with no current confinement sanctions. They are assigned a MHSL 1 and since the Justice Center's visit on August 28, 2025, they have received one additional Tier II misbehavior report for Violent Conduct, Harassment, Creating Disturbance and Threats. They did not receive any additional confinement sanctions and were not placed in RCTP.

Incarcerated individual 2 is currently housed in general population at Five Points Correctional Facility with no current confinement sanctions. They are assigned a MHSL 1 and since the Justice Center's visit on August 28, 2025, they have not received any additional misbehavior reports. They did not receive any additional confinement sanctions and were not placed in RCTP.

8. All incarcerated individuals in the SHU were held for less than 15 consecutive days or 20 days in a 60-day period in segregated confinement.

9. Per HALT training documents received, a total of 19 staff is up to date with Tier III officer training.

10. Request:

Please provide the Justice Center with the hearing packet and any related documents.

Response:

We have attached for your review the disciplinary hearing packet of incarcerated individual 2 for the incident dated August 19, 2025, for the charges of: Weapon, Altered Item and Smuggling.

11. Request and Recommendation:

Please clarify if this was a clerical error or the incarcerated individual was still in the SHU for their 30-day mental health interviews. If it was determined that this was a clerical error, OMH staff should be retrained to ensure that the SHU/RRU Mental Health Assessment is completed with accuracy.

Response:

Incarcerated individual 3 was programming in Sing Sing Correctional Facility's RRU on June 5, 2025, and on July 2, 2025. DOCCS will defer to OMH on the accuracy of the documentation for their mental health assessments.

12. Request and Recommendation:

The Justice Center recommends that OMH staff be retrained to ensure all clinical assessments accurately capture observations and relevant details that explain interactions on an individual basis. This is especially imperative providing the individual's MHSL and the number of times they required a crisis admission to the RCTP.

In addition, please provide the Justice Center with an update regarding incarcerated individual 4. This update should include the individual's MHSL, housing status, current confinement sanctions, any additional misbehavior reports or tickets, and the number of times the individuals were transferred to the RCTP.

Response:

DOCCS will defer to OMH on the accuracy of the documentation for their clinical assessments.

Incarcerated individual 4 is currently programming in the RMHU at Marcy Correctional Facility with confinement sanctions expiring on August 23, 2028. They are assigned a MHSL 1S-Y and since the Justice Center's visit on August 28, 2025, they have received three (3) additional Tier III and three (3) Tier II misbehavior reports. They had admission to RCTP on October 6, 2025, resulting in a CNYPC admission from January 13, 2026, to February 18, 2026, when they were discharged to Marcy Correctional Facility's RMHU.

13. Request and Recommendation:

A private interview is considered the cornerstone of a clinical assessment to assist in establishing trust, emotional safety, and the confidentiality to share sensitive information. Without privacy, an individual may not make a full disclosure, leading to incomplete assessments, inaccurate diagnoses, or ineffective treatment plans.

The Justice Center requests an explanation of why only two (2) incarcerated individuals, or 1.9% of the SHU/RRU Mental Health interviews that were completed for 20 individuals in the sample, engaged in a private interview with clinical staff. In addition, given the low number of private interviews accepted, the Justice Center recommends that the OMH Unit Chief complete quality assurance checks to monitor how many individuals are being offered and accept a private interview.

Response:

DOCCS continues to assist OMH with all out-of-cell callouts and will defer to OMH to elaborate further on why MH evaluations are completed cell side.

14. Request:

The Justice Center recommends that DOCCS Central Office complete a guidance review of the three (3) individuals and provide a justification explaining their extensive confinement sanctions. Within the justification, please include when they entered their confinement, their current release date from sanctions, if they have received any additional Tier III tickets, and how many days each person has received in time cuts. Please include all Individual Rehabilitation Plans that have been completed since August 28, 2025.

The Justice Center also requests any SHU/RRU Mental Health interviews and/or clinical contacts that OMH has had with the three (3) individuals since August 28, 2025.

Lastly, the Justice Center requests all independent reviews that were completed by the DOCCS Commissioner and the Commissioner of Mental Health or their designees approving the continuation for everyone's confinement per the HALT Act.

Response:

Each incarcerated individual with confinement sanctions is reviewed by the PMT every seven (7) days for the first 60 days of their confinement and every 30 days subsequently. The PMT reviews includes granting time cuts when behavior is appropriate and when an individual has made some gains in regards to their programming goals.

Incarcerated individual 5 is assigned a MHSL 1 and is currently housed in general population at Sing Sing Correctional Facility. They were confined on April 9, 2025, after receiving a Tier III misbehavior report for Weapon charges and received 354 days of confinement sanctions. The confinement sanctions imposed were within the normal guidelines.

Incarcerated individual 5 was granted a 316-day time cut and was discharged to general population on March 30, 2026. Since the Justice Center's visit, they received two (2) additional Tier II misbehavior reports. We have attached their IRP for your review.

Incarcerated individual 3 is assigned an MHSL 6 and is currently programming at Lakeview Correctional Facility's SDP. They were confined on October 13, 2024, after receiving a Tier III for charges including Weapon, Assault on Staff, Threats. They received 662 days of confinement sanctions. They were admitted to CNYPC for a 730 evaluation from November 14, 2024, to March 4, 2025.

Their current confinement sanctions expire on August 6, 2027, and since the Justice Center's visit, they have received two (2) additional Tier II misbehavior reports. The confinement sanctions that were imposed were within the normal guidelines. They were granted a total of 62 days in time cuts following a review by the PMT. We have attached their IRP for your review.

Incarcerated individual 6 is assigned an MHSL 3 and is currently programming at Lakeview Correctional Facility's SDP. They were confined on July 17, 2025, after receiving a Tier III for charges including Weapon, Assault on Staff, Threats. They received 180 days of confinement sanctions. The confinement sanctions that were imposed were within the normal guidelines. Their current confinement sanctions expire on August 6, 2027, and since the justice Center's visit, they have received eleven (11) additional Tier II and seven (7) Tier III misbehavior reports. They were granted a total of seven (7) days in time cuts following a review by the PMT. We have attached their IRP for your review.

DOCCS will defer to OMH on the request for SHU/RRU Mental Health interviews and/or OMH clinical contacts since August 28, 2025, for these three (3) individuals.

15. Request:

The Justice Center requests an explanation as to why the individual was not moved from the Clinton Correctional Facility's SHU within the appropriate timeframe as per the HALT Act.

Response:

Incarcerated individual 5 received a Tier III misbehavior report on April 8, 2025, and was placed in the ICP unit (UH-08-017) at Clinton Correctional Facility on April 9, 2025. They were transferred to Green Haven Correctional Facility's intake unit on June 14, 2025, and consequently to Sing Sing Correctional Facility's

RRU on August 27, 2025. Due to the DOCCS job action that ended on March 10, 2025, there was a delay in moving individuals to RRU programming.

16. Request:

The Justice Center requests an explanation as to why the individual was not moved from the Midstate Correctional Facility's SHU within the appropriate timeframe as per the HALT Act.

Response:

Incarcerated individual 7 received a Tier III misbehavior report and was placed in the Midstate Correctional Facility's SHU on March 23, 2025. They were transferred to Sing Sing Correctional Facility's RRU on May 22, 2025. Due to the DOCCS job action that ended on March 10, 2025, there was a delay in moving individuals to RRU programming.

17. Request:

The Justice Center requests an explanation as to why the individual was not seen in for their SHU/RRU Mental Health interview within the appropriate timeframe as per the HALT Act.

Response:

DOCCS will defer to OMH on this request.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your report. I look forward to continuing to work productively with the Justice Center to improve the services for our population.

Sincerely,

James Donahue
Associate Commissioner

cc: Marilyn Kopp, Superintendent - Sing Sing Correctional Facility
Jessica Loomis, Facility Review Specialist, NYS Justice Center