

December 2, 2022



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

(NEW YORK, NEW YORK) The Treatment Not Jail Coalition Issued the Following Statement in Response to Mayor Adams' Recent Address on Mental Health:

"The Treatment Not Jail Coalition unequivocally rejects forced treatment, involuntary hospitalization and the notion that law enforcement is the appropriate first responder for anyone in a mental health crisis. We implore Mayor Adams to revise the draconian and constitutionally unsound mental health plan outlined in Tuesday's press conference, and ask City Hall to instead commit to serving New Yorkers who live with mental health challenges in a way that respects their humanity and civil rights, and recognizes the many oppressive forces that have contributed to their plight for decades.

This moment calls for long-term solutions, a massive reinvestment in our hospitals and community-based healthcare system, and supportive and affordable housing programs. We appreciate the Mayor's focus on the mental health crisis in New York City and his willingness to make ambitious investments in the city's sorely depleted mental health infrastructure. However, we urge the Mayor to use his incredible influence to instead expand access to *voluntary* inpatient and outpatient psychiatric services, supportive housing and transitional housing, including emergency re-entry housing, and legislation, like Treatment Not Jail, which creates new access to *voluntary* treatment for those with underlying mental health challenges that are entangled in the criminal legal system.

Forced treatment and involuntary hospitalization jeopardize the dignity and safety of our most vulnerable community members, who in fact, are ten times more likely to be victims of crime than the general population. Importantly, this strategy is out of step with the prevailing social science research and data, which prove that forced care does not lead to meaningful long-term outcomes for those with mental health challenges. Rather, coercive treatment leads to less long-term engagement, and more instability.

In addition, the Mayor's proposal overlooks the unfortunate reality that these police-driven, inherently-hostile confrontations will quickly escalate and result in arrest and the violence that follows. We have serious concerns that this plan will further criminalize and traumatize this vulnerable population. Instead, we need a dramatic investment in non-police responses to mental health crises. The Mayor should adopt the [CCIT-NYC model](#) to create a peer-driven

mental health crisis response available in every borough, 24-hours per day, rather than the limited B-HEARD model currently employed in just a few precincts.

The Treatment Not Jail coalition implores the Mayor to join us in valuing the autonomy and self-determination of New Yorkers living with mental health challenges and focus investments into community-based solutions. Our coalition - comprised of many people with lived experience with mental health struggles, as well as drug policy advocates, housing experts, criminal legal system reformers, and licensed health professionals - is centered on the core premise that individuals with mental health needs must be the drivers of their own treatment process. Indeed, the [legislation](#) that we have jointly crafted would amend the current treatment court model to abandon coercive, punitive practices, embrace harm reduction principles, adopt the tenets of procedural justice, and require less restrictive forms of programming. We are happy to partner with Mayor Adams to devise a voluntary, community-based, patient-centered approach reconstituting our public health and housing system.”

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The Treatment Not Jail coalition advocates for meaningful off-ramps from the carceral system and increased investment in robust community-based services.