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COBA'S LEGAL ACTION FORCES NYC DOC TO PROVIDE COVID-19 TESTING SITES FOR EVERY NYC CORRECTION OFFICER

NEW YORK- Following a month-long public relations campaign and a legal battle in the courts, the Correction Officers' Benevolent Association, the second-largest law enforcement union in New York City with 20,000 active and retired members, today announced that it has successfully forced the New York City Department of Correction to provide every Correction Officer with access to free COVID-19 tests at numerous Northwell Health urgent care sites located across the city and Long Island.

This major victory comes on the heels of last week's order from Queens State Supreme Justice Pamela B. Jackman Brown, which compelled the Department of Correction to immediately step up its distribution of N-95 masks, gloves, and hand sanitizers, as well as to sanitize the jails more frequently. The last remaining area of contention concerned whether the city would provide free COVID-19 tests for all Correction Officers. Rather than pursue its appeal of the Judges order, the city folded and decided to put the safety of Correction Officers first.

Correction Officers will be provided access to receive COVID-19 testing at Northwell Health urgent care sites, effective immediately. The testing is only for DOC staff with symptoms and/or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19. All Correction Officers must also present official DOC identification upon arriving at the testing location. All Correction Officers will be able to register for an appointment on-line or appear as a walk-in.

For the listing of all urgent care sites, Correction Officers can visit www.northwell.edu/doctors-and-care/locations.

"The past several weeks have hit our officers very hard, from having over 400 officers test positive for COVID-19, to mourning the loss of six of our officers who died from this deadly disease," said COBA President Elias Husamudeen. "Our union has always felt that we should not have to be in court or in the media every day to fight for our members' safety. But since the Department failed to do its job, we needed to leverage every possible resource to help our members during this unprecedented crisis. It is our hope that with these new testing sites provided through Northwell Health, we can eventually turn these numbers around and keep our members healthy and safe. There's much more work ahead, from securing critical line of duty death benefits through legislation that is now making its way through the City Council and the State Legislature, to ensuring that officers who do test positive are not forced to return to work until their personal doctors clear them. No matter what challenge lies ahead, the COBA will confront it head on and for the sake of all of our bold Correction Officers, we will prevail!"