Riker's Island Health Services

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**Introduction**

Rikers Island is a four hundred and thirteen-acre island in the East River between the Bronx and the Queens which is considered to be the home to the city of New York main jail complex. This Island was almost under hundred acres in size but now grown to more than four hundred acres. It is considered to be the largest correctional institutions of the world, and the facility is comprised of ten jails that have a capacity of almost seventeen thousand people and the daily numbers are between seven thousand and nine thousand. The city expressed a desire for opening a jail for men on Rikers Island in 1925. River Island is considered to be the Island which covers more than four hundred and thirteen acres in the East River heart which serves as a barrier of nature among the Manhattan, the Bronx and the Queen. Several private and commercial marine vessels navigate the water among the Island of Riker. The ships, barges, and the boats are mandated for maintaining a certain distance away from the complex of jail to avoid inmates from escaping. The Riker's Island southern tip includes a huge lot of parking which accommodates hundreds of vehicles, that are mostly utilized by the employees. It has been estimated that more than nine thousand individual work at severe correctional institutions. Additionally, the parking lots are used by more than ten thousand annual visitors. When talking about the River Island infrastructure, it is significant for emphasizing that there are ten different jails in operation. The George R. Vierno Center, George Motchan Detention Center, and Otis Bantum Correctional Center are some common example of facilities which are used for holding and processing inmates. This report describes the complete information related to Rikers Island.

**Discussion**

**Design**

Due to its huge size, the Rikers Island does not have whole outdoor recreational facilities. The layout style of the jail industry is optimized for containing inmates within the define boundaries that are commonly defined by the East River. Riker Island consists of ten separate jails with a population of an inmate of more than fourteen thousand and a staff of approximately eight thousand and five hundred. Inmates include people awaiting trial who are serving sentences of more or less than one year and also those awaiting transfer for other facilities. It was particularly intended for serving as a work-house, so the city expressed a desire for constructing a jail of bigger man on the site. So, to prepare for the construction of facility the garbage foundation, street dirt and landfill was dumped on the Island for expanding the ground and also for saving the Street Cleaning Department. In 1924, all operation of barge landfilling in the city of New York was consolidated at the Island of Rikers and unlike other landfills of the city that capped the garbage height heaps to ten feet as a result of which the mounds of Rikers Island went higher. The official opening of Riker's Island happened in 1932, and landfilling was continued to be added to the property until 1943, enhancing the original ninety-acre land plot for its current size of roughly four hundred and fifteen acres. According to the Ten Steinberg two hundred acres were detached from the Rikers for helping fill in the Airport of new North Beach (MacDonald, et, al., 2015).

**Location**

Rikers Island is located in East River between the Bronx and Queens in New York City. It is situated very close to the LaGuardia Airport runway and named after Abraham Rycken who discovered the Island in 1664. The expansion first stages were accomplished greatly by the convict labor which hauled in ashes for the landfill. The island is considered to be Bronx part politically, and the access of bridge is from the Queens and also included in the Queen community board’s part and utilizes the Queens Zip Code of Jackson Height of 11370 for mailing purpose. The island is home to one of the largest mental and correctional institutions of the world. It has been considered as the most famous jail of New York. In fact, it has also been referred to the Largest Panel Colony of the world. The only road which has access to the Rikers Island is from Queens over the four thousand three-lane Francis Buono Bridge which was dedicated by Mayor John Lindsay on 22nd November 1966. Before the construction of the bridge, the only access to the island was through ferry. There are also private shuttles which connect a lot of parking at the south end to the Island. Services of Bus within the Rikers island for visitors is given by the Correction Department of New York City on Fridays to Sundays. In order to replace their dilapidated and overburdened jail on Welfare Island, the jail on Rikers Island was opened in 1932. The continuity of landfilling was to be added to the island until 1943 which helps in enlarging the ninety-acre island to four hundred and fifteen acres. The official opening of Riker's Island happened in 1932, and landfilling was continued to be added to the property until 1943, enhancing the original ninety-acre land plot for its current size of roughly four hundred and fifteen acres. According to the Ten Steinberg, two hundred acres were detached from the Rikers for helping fill in the Airport of new North Beach (Olson, & Phillips, 2013).

**Classification**

Rikers Island contains nine thousand officers, fifteen hundred civilians, and a population of ten thousand inmates. It manages one hundred thousand admissions every year. The total number of an inmate with Rikers Island is approximately seventy-six percent on the awaiting trial. The other inmates have been sentenced to jail of the city or are awaiting transfer to the prison of state. About ninety-three percent of the inmates are male out of which fifty-seven percent are black, thirty-three percent Hispanic, seven percent which and only one percent Asian. Out of approximately twelve thousand inmates within the whole system, more than ten thousand of these individuals are considered to be incarcerated on Rikers Island. Similarly, in the Riker Island youth has a significant presence. Mostly youth of sixteen and seventeen years old are placed in Rikers Island, and there are currently almost five hundred males and thirty females ages 16-17 years old, housed in the facility. Black and Hispanic youth make up an overwhelming ninety-five percent of jails of New York City. On Riker Island, the attendance of school is necessary and armed security guards are assigned to each classroom. The average students read at the level of fifth grade, and more than fifty percent of the jail students are diagnosed for having the special needs of education. According to an estimate of more than ninety percent of the correctional youth of facility is re-arrested by the time when they are twenty-eight. According to the official report of the independent budget it has been estimated that annual spending for each inmate on the Island of Rikers is considered to be more than one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. This is about almost more than four hundred dollars per day of per inmate of taxpayer dollars. According to the recent research, there are on average more than twelve thousand inmates in the correctional system of New York City on any given day (Nytimes, 2014).

**Housing**

The housing facilities in Rikers Island is as follow:

Benjamin ward care visit is considered to be one of the most significant facilities of Rikers Island which serves ten separate jail on Rikers Island. All visitors should coordinate their visits by the ward visit center of the Benjamin. This Visit Center is situated at Eighteen Thirty-one Hazen St. East Elmhurst, NY 11370.

RNDC (Robert N. Davoren Center) is another important health care facility of Rikers Island which was opened in 1972 and also known as facility housed. These are present in separate quarters where adolescent male prisoners whose age ranges from sixteen to seventeen and other adult male prisoners are kept in modular cells, sprung structures, and dormitories. The Riker Island dedicated the Robert N. Davoren Center in May 2006 due to the honor of the Department Former Chief.

GMDC (George Motchan Detention Center) originally started in 1971 as the Women Correctional Institution. In 1988 with the opening of Rose M. Singer Center for women it became a male detention center and also renamed in the memory of seventeen-year-old Correction officer who was shot during her duty. This structure is now no longer utilized for inmates of the house.

Eric M. Taylor Center was built in 1964 and then expanded in 1973 where adolescent and adult male inmates were sentenced to terms of one or less than one year. Mostly the style of its housing is a dormitory. Sentenced inmates of Able-bodied are required for working and providing Rikers Island with the industrial labor force, facility maintenance, and grounds crews. The facility which was designated the Correctional Institution for Men in the past was renamed on 14th of July 2000 in honor of Eric M. Taylor who was the retired Chief of Department.

AMKC (Anna M. Kross Center was completed in 1978 and named in honor of the second female commissioner of DOC. Male prisoners in forty housing areas of AKMC which spread over forty acres. It also has a Methadone Unit of Detoxification for detainees and mental health care center of DOC which is established in 1962.

Another health facilitation center is known as Rose M. Singer Center (RMSC) which was completed in June 1988 as an eight hundred bed facility for the female prisoners and sentenced inmates.

NIC (North Infirmary Command) consists of two different buildings out of which one is known as the Rikers Island Hospital which was built in 1932. It provides housing of inmates who have an acute condition of health and need the care of infirmary or have a disability which needs housing.

Other Facilitation houses include Queens Detention Complex, Vernon C. Brain Center, Manhattan Detention Complex, Brooklyn Detention Complex, West Facility Contagious Disease Unit, James A. Thomas Center, George R. Vierno Center, and Otis Bantum Correctional Center (Olson & Philips, 2013).

**Medical Care**

The Transitional Health Care Coordination Bureau is responsible for coordinating the education of health and delivery of service from incarceration to the community for all the inmates of Riker Island. These health education programs focus on the critical areas for all the inmates of Riker Island from the cornerstone of the program. These programs include treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS of some chronic diseases like asthma, diabetes, and hypertension. The Correctional Department and the authority of Health are responsible for the implementation and design of written procedures and policies that ensure that all the inmates have adequate and prompt access to all the services of health care. Rikers Island is the biggest provider of services of acute mental health care. The health authority has developed procedures and policies for ensuring that inmates must have medical opinions regarding the recommendations of the clinic. All requests of inmates for emergency dental or medical attention would be responded by the medical personnel. This includes a face to face interaction between the inmate and health care personnel. Medical personnel assesses each inmate condition after every twenty-four hours. The training and education of correctional and health care personnel for ensuring the assignment or employment of qualified personnel and continuous quality health care delivery. Mentally ill inmates are released during the hours of daylight.

 The management team of services of Correctional Health Services is comprised of ten dedicated and exceptional health professionals of the public who work together for improving the mental, dental, medical health care and discharge services of planning that is provided to the inmates in Rikers Island. The Transitional health care coordination is integrated with some other programs in the division that include the process of enrollment into EPIC, Child Health Plus, and Medicaid. It has the links with other programs of DOHMH, city agencies, District Public Health Offices, community-based providers and Task Force of Discharge planning. As the full range of services of health Is given on the Rikers Island so linking patients and their families to health services and information in the society can promote better access to the services of health care through a true care model continuity. The Central Visit Center Health Station in Rikers Island gives health screening and information to the families of inmates and by referrals is an avenue to the programs of the community (Porter, 2015).

The Department of Correction secure facilities in two hospitals of a city which include Elmhurst Hospital Ward which works for female inmates who require acute care of mental health. The other one is Bellevue Hospital Prison Ward, Manhattan which works for the male inmates who requires medical or psychiatric treatment. The Correction Department of New York City gives the control, custody, and care of persons sentenced to one year of jail time or accused of crimes. The department also manages facilities of almost eleven inmates, out of which eight are located on the Rikers Island. Moreover, the department also operates two wards of hospital prison which include Elmhurst and Bellevue hospitals, and the court holds the facilities in every borough. During the Fiscal year 2018, this department also handled more than forty-nine thousand admissions and managed an average daily population of an inmate which is approximately eight thousand and nine hundred individuals.

**Programs**

SAID Program

Rikers Island with the collaboration between agencies of public health, organization which are based on the community, and health services of jail have implications for the health of public and efforts of the safety which are proven for facilitating linkage to care for incarceration. The screening of medical facilities which happen for all the inmates of Riker Island provide an opportunity for implementing some interventions. For providing the inmates with the possible comprehensive services, the SAID program integrates some particular services which are available by the program with some other services given on Riker's Island. Services of Health are usually provided by Montefiore Hospital that gives all the services of health for the inmates at Rikers Island. Pregnant women in Rikers Island during their first and second trimester can work as the volunteer in the SAID program and do not receive any special health care training during their third trimester where they move out of the SAID program into some special program of maternity. The administration staff of this program includes secretary, chief expediter, house manager, and coordinator-supervisor. The chief expediter ensures that all the members of this program attend the meetings, updating the current information on each of her assigned members, maintaining the lists of the phone, and monitoring the sheets of the sign in or out. Counselors play a significant role in documenting and monitoring the inmate's progress regarding goals of treatment and the participation of the group within the program. The counselors who are hired in this program have working experience in the treatment programs of the residential drug. Both women and men counselor work with the female prisoners (Hoch, et, al., 2008).

According to the eligibility criteria for the inmates who are interested in SAID program should be nonviolent offenders, have scores between one to ten on the classification instrument of Correction Risk Department, agree for participating in all the activities of SAID, have medical clearance, have psychiatric disorder history, cannot utilize any psychotropic drugs, and should be not in the third trimester of pregnancy. Inmates who are the member of the SAID program in Rikers Island have to move through 4 stages of services. First, when they get new admission, they are recruited by the counselors of SAID program. Then after volunteering, they spend almost ten days in assessment and screening unit. After passing the screening test, they are sent to the housing units of therapy where they receive intensive and structured treatment from the staff of SAID. At the end upon release, these inmates are referred to the treatment programs of community-based.

SAID (Substance Abuse Intervention Division) program is considered to be another health care program in Riker Island that offers a highly structured modified community of therapy and interventions that are designed for alcohol other drug abuse. The major SAID program component includes supportive and structured environment, focus on building living skills of positive community, individual or group counselling, the interaction of cooperative peer, counseling of substance abuse, and physical or educational exercise. The significant part of the structure of the program is its focus on developing and discipline the basic habits. Counselors stress the significance of tiny things such as habitually getting early in the morning and remaining busy. Inmates of Rikers Island is given thirty-three tips for the cleanliness practice and also expected for following them. Any type of violent behavior violates the program results and rules in termination. The philosophy of the program focuses on the orientation of a family in which several conflicts are mediated by group resolution and peer pressure. As a result of which, the inmates become responsible for their conduct. Such responsibility breeds a sense of dignity and respect among the inmates of SAID that is not the population of the general inmate. Inmates can leave the SAID program either by being discharged from the institution or by requesting to move out from this program. Although inmates can request the jail staff to move them back to the population of general prison the counselors continuously try hard for dissuading them from leaving the program. The units of SAID in Rikers Island which serve men operate in a similar manner which serves women. However, some extra efforts are made for gearing the program towards the particular female inmate needs. Women need more counseling on parenting and family problems and are offered training in the jobs of gender-typed like beautician and aide of a nurse (Ravi, et, al. 2017).

Tele Health Services for Women at Rikers Island

New York City correctional health services and hospitals announced today the telehealth services launch for the female patients on the Island of Riker enhancing on the services of the telehealth which is available at the Hospitals of New York City men on Rikers. The expansion of telehealth program is expected for reducing the inconvenience of the patient, minimizing disruptions in the operations of the hospital and reducing the demand on the department of correction resources. Whenever the female patients at the Island of Rikers need special care, they are taken to Health Hospital of New York City. As a result of several security precautions linked with the transportation of the patient from hospital to the Riker for the appointment of special care, the trip can take several hours, and patients should forgo regular programming they receive in the jail like recreational time and law library. Such hurdles can lead some female patients for refusing an appointment and putting their health in danger. Many researchers believe that telehealth is a good way for improving access to care and it is also considered to be an effective step for the women health (LeCompte, 2014).

As every woman in this world deserve access to complete range of services of health care, no matters where she lives. With the help of telehealth services for women in the Rikers land, several gaps and missed appointments in health care can be reduced. The effective and innovative option can help in addressing the need for individual health and can also provide constant care for the female staff who are incarcerated. This facility was launched in February 2018, the services of telehealth include hematology, oncology, and rheumatology services while some other facilities such as gastroenterology and removal of infectious disease will be included later. This is considered to be an invaluable project and one of the greatest idea for medicine. The population of women of Riker Island is considered to be lesser than men, but their need for health services are not lesser. Such women have a lot of issues related to their health so it is considered to be everyone including jail staff, doctors and patients advantage for using the services of telehealth as with the help of it patient can get a fine medical visit more easily and quickly. It can ensure that patients can get their essential care (Wynn, 2002).

Green House Programs

The River Island Jails in New York, which is the largest jail complex in America runs the program of horticulture that is known as the Green House Program. Out of fourteen thousand convicts of the jail, almost one hundred and twenty-five offence inmates are working under the Green House Program. The therapy program of Horticulture is already celebrated to be effective in the inmates healing by prisoners by nurturing them with the environmental lifestyle which prepares and restore them for the population outside the prison after they get free from the prison. This Program of Green House gives education for a modern perspective and reveal to a modern life value to prisoners, development for hands-on skills or experience and vocational training. The program of Green House has only five to ten percent rate of offences. The director of Program of Green House in the prison of Riker Island, James Jiller claimed that the Green House Program of Rikers Island is distant from the old prison farms where the labor of agriculture is seen as punishment. This program is about the development of actual hands-on-agricultural rehabilitation, healing, counseling, and skills through the interaction of human nature. With the help of such power of therapy of exposing an individual to nature, the program of Green House can be exceeded its effect on the inmates by resetting and educating their mindset transforming their life quality, a style for reflection, an action of restoration and reversibility.

The Therapy of horticulture is considered to be the ancient practice of human rehabilitation and healing by gardening has been acknowledged to have important therapeutic to the elderly, ill and others. The therapy of horticulture is the most-healthy and earth-friendly way of improving the mental and physical well-being of an individual, reduction of stress, learning to appreciate nature and reconnect. Several projects and studies have ensured its positive effects. The approach of the Green House Program is not against the method of the jail where they kept the inmates inside and also made them feel trapped as a result of which anger and anxiety grow in them. Instead of utilizing high fences and walls around the jail boundary, the Riker Island open landscape choose to utilize a less stressing and threatening ways of setting the boundary. So by utilizing the separate visual complexity level that depends on the security risks level, the plant's height and garden which surround the area that builds a safe environment for the inmates. Such efforts are enough for them to know zone boundaries which the inmates are not allowed to pass. The sense of security with these not unessential inmates stress and mild boundary builds the trusts to the inmates. So being in a completely enclosed jail room and open prison has a significant difference in re-establishing the value and self-esteem of an inmate. Along with the putting trust and gaining of a sense of security onto the inmates, reversible reflection and positioning is a healing part to the inmates of Program of Green House (Jiller, 2009).

With the help of consuming and growing food, the Rikers Island inmates learn the significance of community and raise their significance and self-esteem to their being, that they can be no harm. The Green House Program also gives a chance to inmates for feeling accomplishment, acknowledgement, and acceptance, that they have not had before. The inmates who work under the project of Green House also mentioned that working and growing on the farm provides accomplishment sense. Green House Program helps to reduce the workers and inmates stress. Stress is considered to be a significant problem which creates a tense prisons atmosphere. Garden and natural setting in Riker Island can be psychologically and physically beneficial for the prison and inmates stress in terms of alleviating mental fatigue and reducing stress. Gardening and agriculture in Rikers Island is a method to the growth of inmates in themselves and method for finding new sides that can lead them for settling them in the jobs of agriculture. This program does not just transform the perception of agriculture and plants of inmates but also push them for the modern start outside Rikers Island (Shanahan, 2018).

**Release**

The process of release in Rikers Island is still in the hands of New York City. The process of release is based on the process of multi-step. The family member of the inmates has to complete the step of the process and money has been posted after the signature of the agreement. These three steps contain:

1. The bond should be presented in front of the judge.

2. The cut slip should be delivered to the concerned facility.

3. Corrections should process the release of inmates.

In order to release the inmate from the Rikers Island the bond of the bail should be approved and reviewed through the judge before it can save the release of a defendant. In most of the cases, the bond should be presented to the particular judge for hearing the case and should also be presented to during the hours of court. Unfortunately, the courts concerning Rikers Island and Department of Corrections have not been fully embraced by the modern technology so the recent slip of cut should be delivered through the courier to the appropriate authorized facility. There are only two facilities of Correction in the Rikers Island on the East River near LaGuardia due to which the delivery takes longer time significantly. The accessibility of Rikers Island is only through the bus which takes almost twenty-four hours. After reaching to the facility, the courier waits for the employee of Corrections for receiving, reviewing and approving the slip and this process takes almost forty-five minutes. After the acceptance of cut slip, the next step is waiting for the correction for processing the release of inmates. This process is generally of a longer period, and it takes around seven hours. So, in order to complete the process of release of inmates from Rikers Island, it takes around ten hours.

The Rikers Island has established a free twenty-four service of hotline which gives information related to the status of custody of inmates in Rikers Island. It also initiates the automatic notifications for registered callers related to the release of particular inmates. Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) was created for giving crime victims feasible access for important information of custody about whether a specific inmate is still incarcerated. Victim Information and Notification Everyday include Release notification of Inmate and Custody Information of Inmate. Vine can confirm whether the inmate is in custody or not, and also allows the caller for registering to get an automatic telephonic alert on the releasing of the inmate. Moreover, it also starts the notification on the telephone to the caller that the prisoner has been released or transferred from the custody of Rikers Island.

As there are much news going on related to the closing of Rikers Island so the management has decided to start a program of Supervised-released in which cash bail could be eliminated and that can possibly reduce the population of the jail of Rikers Island by almost two thousand inmates. This strategy of supervised release can help for moving the total jail population towards the city which falls from almost eight thousand individuals today to lesser than five thousand in the future which can enable the closure of Rikers. This can help to prevent the population from sitting on Rikers Island and wasting the money of taxpayer because they could not come up with the money of bail. They would be prosecuted due to their crimes, and in case of absence from their court proceeding, a warrant can also be issued which can result in the cancellation of their supervised release. This program of supervised release has hit a milestone by helping the city for moving towards the closure of Rikers Island (Milner, et, al., 2015).

**Conclusion**

So, it is concluded that Rikers Island is one of the largest jail complexes of the world which provides several health facilities to the inmates. Therefore, instead of closing Rikers Island suitable strategies and policies should be implemented to avoid its closure for providing maximum benefit to the inmates.

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