Final Report of the New York State Commission of Correction:

In the Matter of the Death of

Donald McCoy, an incarcerated individual of the Erie County Holding Center

December 17, 2025

To: Sheriff John C. Garcia
Erie County Sheriff's Office
10 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14202

Allen Riley
Chairman

Yolanda Canty
Commissioner

Elizabeth Gaynes
Commissioner

GREETINGS:

WHEREAS, the Medical Review Board has reported to the NYS Commission of Correction pursuant to Correction Law, section 47(1)(d), regarding the death of Donald McCoy, who died on December 21, 2023, as a result of circumstances which occurred while an incarcerated individual in the custody of the Erie County Sheriff at the Erie County Holding Center, the Commission has determined that the following final report be issued.

FINDINGS:

1. Donald McCoy was a 78-year-old male who died at Buffalo General Hospital on 12/21/23 from hypertensive and atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease while in the custody of the Erie County Sheriff. McCoy had been incarcerated at the Erie County Holding Center (ECHC). Although McCoy death was due to unavoidable natural causes, the Medical Review Board did find deficiencies with his medical care during his incarceration.

2. McCoy was born in South Carolina. McCoy reported having a College Degree in Business Administration and that he was retired. McCoy was single and had nine children.

3. [redacted]

4. [redacted].

5. [redacted].

6. On 12/3/20, McCoy was arrested by the Buffalo City Police Department and charged with Murder:Intention. McCoy was transported to the Erie County Medical Center (ECMC) for a self-inflicted knife wound to the chest that preceded his arrest.

7. On 12/5/20, McCoy was arraigned in Buffalo City Court, and he was remanded to the Erie County Sheriff at the Erie County Holding Center without bail. McCoy's next court date was scheduled for 12/11/20.

8. On 12/5/20 at 2:16 p.m., McCoy was admitted to the ECHC by Deputy N. McCoy was assigned to medical reception cell # 28. [redacted]

[redacted].

9. [redacted]

10. [redacted]

11. [redacted]

[redacted].

12. [redacted]

13. [redacted]

14. [redacted]

15. [redacted]

[redacted].

16. [redacted].

17. [redacted].

18. [redacted]

19. [redacted]

20. [redacted]

21. [redacted]

22. [redacted].

23. [redacted].

24. [redacted]

25. [redacted].

26. [redacted]

[redacted]

27. [redacted]

28. [redacted]

29. [redacted].

30. [redacted].

31. [redacted]

[redacted].

32. [redacted].

33. [redacted]

34. [redacted].

35. [redacted]

36. [redacted]

37. [redacted]

[redacted]

38. [redacted]

39. [redacted] The Medical Review Board finds that there was a failure by the medical staff to have McCoy evaluated by a physician between 11/17/23 and 11/25/23. McCoy, who presented with complaints of bizarre behavior was not properly assessed not referred to physician for assessment to rule out causes of his behavior. His condition continued to deteriorate through 11/24/23 when a sergeant referred McCoy to mental health due to observations of decompensation. McCoy was only assessed by a mental health clinician and not a medical provider, to what the Board opines was a failure to consider any acute metabolic conditions that may be contributing to his observed decompensation. Upon admission to the hospital on 11/25/23 McCoy was diagnosed with acute encephalopathy, hyponatremia, elevated blood pressure, Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) and a. developing epidural abscess at L1–L2 discitis with osteomyelitis. All of these were progressive conditions that the Board opines would have been detected sooner had McCoy received adequate medical care.

40. [redacted].

41. [redacted]

42. On 12/21/23 at approximately 9:10 a.m., McCoy arrived at the Erie County Courthouse and was being escorted by the deputies from the transport van to the courthouse entrance when he slumped to his knees. While awaiting the arrival of a wheelchair, McCoy stopped responding to the deputies and he was observed to be breathless without a pulse. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) was initiated, and AMR was called to respond to the Courthouse. The Automated External Defibrillator (AED) was applied with no shock advised and CPR continued until the arrival of AMR.

43. On 12/21/23 at 9:32 a.m., Paramedic arrived at the scene

44.

ACTIONS REQUIRED:

TO THE JAIL PHYSICIAN OF THE EIRE COUNTY HOLDING CENTER:

The Medical Review Board requests that the jail physician conduct a quality assurance review of the medical care provided to McCoy with special regard to why he was not referred to a physician for evaluation despite multiple observations being made of his mental health decompensation for over a week.

A report of the findings and any corrective actions taken shall be provided to the Board upon completion.

In a response dated 11/7/25 to the Commission's preliminary report, the Sheriff's Office indicated that a quality assurance review was completed in this matter. However, the Commission did not find any indication that any corrective actions were taken. The Commission will follow up on the report findings at a later scheduled health services evaluation.

TO THE CHAIR OF THE ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATURE:

As the appointing authority for the delivery of jail incarcerated individual health services pursuant to Correction Law section 501, the County Legislature shall review the above findings and conduct an inquiry into the fitness of the formally designated provider.

WITNESS, HONORABLE YOLANDA CANTY, Commissioner, NYS Commission of Correction, Alfred E. Smith State Office Building, 80 South Swan Street, 12th Floor, in the City of Albany, New York 12210 on this 17th day of December 2025.

Yolanda Canty
Commissioner
Commission of Correction

YC:BB:vc
2023-M-0138
December 17, 2025