



NYSCOPBA Sounds Alarm Over Ongoing Chemical Exposure Crisis in State Prisons

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Albany, NY — The New York State Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association (NYSCOPBA) is once again raising urgent concerns following a disturbing surge in chemical and drug exposure incidents affecting staff at correctional facilities across New York State. Most recently, Clinton Correctional Facility in Dannemora has seen an alarming spike in staff exposures to dangerous, unidentified substances but this is far from an isolated case.

Facilities throughout the state have been experiencing similar incidents over the past several months, placing our members, the frontline Officers, Sergeants and other staff charged with maintaining safety

and order in harm's way simply for doing their jobs. These exposures pose immediate health risks and create unsafe working conditions that are unacceptable by any standard.

While the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS), in collaboration with NYSCOPBA, has taken important steps following the recent strike, including the implementation of legal mail scanners and the strengthening of body scanner policies. It is clear that much more needs to be done. These efforts were a necessary start in addressing the influx of drugs and contraband into our facilities, but they have not gone far enough to stem the tide of dangerous substances endangering staff, incarcerated individuals, and the surrounding communities.

"This is not just a Clinton issue, this is a systemwide crisis," said Northern Region Vice President John Roberts. "The safety of our members continues to be compromised by exposure to unknown chemicals and drugs, and the broader impact is being felt by the communities we serve."

The strain on local emergency services is growing. At Clinton Correctional Facility alone, the frequency of medical emergencies requiring ambulance transport is pulling critical resources away from the local community, leaving residents underserved during their own emergencies. This escalating situation is now not only a workplace safety crisis, but also a public health and community safety issue.

NYSCOPBA is calling for:

- A statewide, transparent investigation into the source and nature of these exposures
- Immediate implementation of enhanced screening, detection, and response protocols

The current conditions are unsustainable. NYSCOPBA remains committed to advocating for the safety and well-being of our members and will continue to push for real, lasting solutions to protect staff, incarcerated individuals, and the communities that surround our facilities.