



## ***NYSCOPBA Calls For Immediate Ban on Inmate Visits***

### ***Call for Action Comes Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic***

***For Immediate Release  
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**Albany, NY** – NYSCOPBA President Michael B. Powers and the Executive Board have called on DOCCS and OMH to immediately suspend inmate and inmate patient visits amid the on-going COVID-19 crisis in New York and across the country.

Governor Cuomo declared a state of emergency on Saturday and many colleges, universities, and schools have suspended classes for the remainder of the semester. Mass gatherings have been limited and most major sporting and entertainment events have been canceled or postponed in an effort to slow the spread of the virus.

Albany County and dozens of other counties across the state have suspended inmate visits at county jails. Oregon, South Carolina, Louisiana, Missouri and Florida are states that have already announced visitation bans.

In addition, OMH, OPWDD and all other NYSCOPBA members who are employed in essential state agencies should be protected from unnecessary outside contact and exposure to the virus.

“DOCCS and OMH should immediately suspend all inmate and inmate patient visits to limit the spread of the Coronavirus. Protecting both staff and inmates from the spread of COVID-19 should be the highest priority of DOCCS and OMH administrations. Continuing to allow inmate visits without proper testing puts both staff and inmates at risk. Medical experts have stated containing the virus among prisons and jails will be a challenge with inmates living and staff working in close quarters. Continuing to allow inmate visits only exacerbates that challenge and we are calling on the Acting Commissioner to suspend all visits until this pandemic is under control. It is the prudent thing to do.” – stated Michael B. Powers, NYSCOPBA President.