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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NJDOC REACHES AGREEMENT WITH DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ON PATH FORWARD FOR EDNA MAHAN CORRECTIONAL FACILITY FOR WOMEN

TRENTON, NJ—Aug. 10, 2021 -- The New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC), and the Department of Justice (DOJ), has reached an agreement on actions to remediate decades of inmate abuse at the state's sole women's prison, Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women. The proposed consent decree terms include federal monitoring, increased staff training and oversight, inmate education on sexual assault and harassment, increased reporting mechanisms that allow for anonymity, and ensuring new and existing policies are gender-informed.

"The agreement marks a significant step in our journey to transform the culture of Edna Mahan with a tangible plan and federal monitoring that ensures women in the state's care are treated with dignity and respect," said NJDOC Acting Commissioner Victoria Kuhn, Esq. "We look at this measure as an opportunity to close the book on the sordid history of the facility and pen a new way forward, driven by integrity, safety, and support services to help those in our care flourish. We appreciate the assistance of the DOJ and welcome the partnership provided by the federal monitor."

The Department has already made significant strides to address many of the DOJ recommendations by providing increased inmate education on sexual assault, harassment, and abuse, along with a variety of mechanisms to report abuse, including anonymous reporting methods. The Department has also increased staff training in the areas identified by the DOJ, including gender-responsiveness and has made headway to increase oversight. Oversight initiatives include a body-worn cameras pilot program and an Early Warning System detecting inappropriate behavioral patterns in all staff – both custody and civilian – with professional development tools to help address problematic behaviors. The Department also hired sexual assault advocate and corrections expert, Helene Tomé, to the newly created role of Assistant Commissioner of Women's Services. In her role, Assistant Commissioner Tomé serves as a

liaison to further amplify the voices of the incarcerated women and is tasked with implementing the DOJ recommendations in partnership with the Department's correctional consulting firm, The Moss Group.

The proposed consent decree can be found here <https://www.justice.gov/usao-nj/press-release/file/1423066/download>.

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