NEWS RELEASE
DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION
Commissioner Claire DeMatteis

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Delaware Department of Correction Selects National Leader in Correctional Healthcare Services

Dover, DE – Commissioner Claire DeMatteis today announced that the Delaware Department of Correction (DOC) and Connections Community Support Programs, Inc. (Connections) mutually have agreed to release Connections as Delaware’s correctional medical and behavioral health services vendor three months prior to expiration of the current contracts. The DOC also is announcing that after a thorough review process, it has selected a national leader in correctional healthcare services to provide medical care, behavioral health care and substance use disorder treatment to individuals under DOC supervision.

The DOC, through its Bureau of Healthcare, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services, is responsible for contracting medical and behavioral health services in all of its Level V (prison) and Level IV (work release and violation of probation) facilities, as well as providing behavioral health services to individuals on supervised probation. The DOC initiated Requests for Proposal (RFPs) for correctional medical care on November 14, 2019 and behavioral health care/substance abuse treatment on December 20, 2019. Four firms submitted proposals in response to the RFP: Centurion, Connections, Corizon Health, and Wellpath.

After an extensive review process, the DOC has awarded both contracts to Centurion of Delaware, LLC. Centurion provides healthcare services to state, county, and municipal correctional systems in 15 states, including neighboring Maryland and Pennsylvania. As part of its proposal and contract, Centurion will establish a Delaware office, led by a vice president dedicated to the Delaware correctional services.

“Centurion was the unanimous choice,” said Commissioner DeMatteis. “Centurion has deep experience providing quality medical care, behavioral healthcare, and substance abuse treatment services. It takes a special person to be a doctor, nurse, counselor or clinical support staff person in a prison, and Centurion has a demonstrated track record of investing in training for medical professionals and continuous process improvement.”

The transition of DOC’s correctional medical care and correctional behavioral health care contracts to Centurion will get underway immediately. Both three-year agreements with Centurion officially begin April 1, 2020, and can be followed by up to two optional two-year renewals.

Vienna, Virginia-based Centurion, LLC is owned by Centene Corporation of St. Louis, Missouri, a multi-national company that provides integrated healthcare services to government-sponsored
and commercial healthcare programs across all 50 U.S. states and abroad, and contracts with other healthcare and commercial organizations to provide a variety of specialty healthcare services.

“Centurion is pleased to partner with the Delaware Department of Correction, and we are committed to working with the DOC to improve the medical and behavioral healthcare, and substance use disorder treatment for individuals under DOC custody,” said Centurion CEO Steven H. Wheeler. “We look forward to bringing our innovative staffing and care solutions to Delaware’s unified state correctional agency.”

DOC’s new healthcare services contracts are the latest and most significant steps taken by the Department to strengthen Delaware’s correctional healthcare system. Last summer, Commissioner DeMatteis initiated an independent review by ChristianaCare of its correctional healthcare system as it sought recommendations to strengthen clinical quality, patient safety and data management practices. That review found a passionate, caring healthcare and corrections workforce committed to meet the needs of their patients and examples of quality and innovative healthcare across all DOC facilities. It also identified several areas for improvement, including better information sharing and problem solving across correctional stakeholders; an enhanced quality improvement program across all facilities; and, an improved electronic health records system. This review supplements ongoing quality assurance measures employed by the Bureau of Healthcare, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services in the areas of infection prevention, improved environment of care, pharmacy and equipment inventory.

Connections has provided DOC’s medical healthcare since 2014 and behavioral health services since 2012. The company has a history of providing care to some of Delaware’s most vulnerable residents since the 1980s through a wide variety of community programs, which will continue. “It is with a heavy heart and mixed emotions that Connections Community Support Programs withdraws from this collaborative endeavor with DOC that has significantly benefited the citizens of Delaware for the last 8 years,” said Dr. William F. Northey, Jr., Interim President and CEO. “By its nature providing quality care in correctional institutions is a significant challenge. The doctors, nurses, clinicians, and all of the staff give their best every day to provide patient care. It has been our pleasure to serve as the medical and behavioral health care provider to the DOC and an honor to have worked with such dedicated staff in both organizations.”