



August 16, 2007

Rima Khabbaz, M.D.
Director
National Center for Preparedness, Detection,
and Control of Infectious Disease
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Mailstop C-14
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30333

AMERICAN CIVIL
LIBERTIES UNION FOUNDATION

Dear Dr. Khabbaz:

PLEASE RESPOND TO:
NATIONAL PRISON PROJECT
915 15TH STREET, NW
7TH FLOOR
WASHINGTON, DC 20005-2112
T/202.393.4930
F/202.393.4931
WWW.ACLU.ORG

ELIZABETH ALEXANDER
DIRECTOR
ATTORNEY AT LAW

NATIONAL OFFICE
125 BROAD STREET, 18TH FL.
NEW YORK, NY 10004-2400
T/212.549.2500

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS
NADINE STROSSEN
PRESIDENT

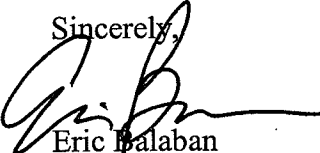
ANTHONY D. ROMERO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RICHARD ZACKS
TREASURER

I am writing respectfully to request that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conduct an immediate and thorough investigation into the apparent outbreak of staph infections at Orleans Parish Prison (OPP), the New Orleans jail. Over the past several months, the American Civil Liberties Union has spoken with numerous people housed at OPP who have reportedly contracted severe staph infections in the jail. OPP currently houses approximately 2600 detainees, many of whom live in severely overcrowded and unsanitary conditions. As you know, staph infections are highly contagious—particularly in prison and jail settings—and may lead to serious complications such as deep abscesses, pneumonia, endocarditis, meningitis, bone infection, blood infection, and death.

Because many people cycle in and out of OPP every day, the prevalence of staph infections poses a serious public health risk not only to the detainees, correctional officers, and staff members inside of OPP, but also to the greater New Orleans community. The risk to the public would be enhanced if the prisoners were developing methicillin- or vancomycin-resistant staph infections. An immediate investigation is required to explore the scope and cause of this apparent problem, and to take all necessary steps to ensure the safety of the people in OPP and throughout New Orleans. To this end, we have notified local and state public health officials with the information we have provided to you here.

Please respond promptly to inform us of the steps the CDC is taking to investigate this matter. If you require any additional information, we may be reached at (202) 393-4930, or at the address on the side of this page.

Sincerely,


Eric Palaban
Tom Jawetz
ACLU National Prison Project



August 16, 2007

Frederick Cerise, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary
Louisiana Department of Health & Hospitals
628 N. 4th Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Dear Dr. Cerise:

I am writing respectfully to request that the Louisiana Department of Health & Hospitals conduct an immediate and thorough investigation into the apparent outbreak of staph infections at Orleans Parish Prison (OPP). Over the past several months, the American Civil Liberties Union has spoken with numerous people housed at OPP who have reportedly contracted severe staph infections in the jail. OPP currently houses approximately 2600 detainees, many of whom live in severely overcrowded and unsanitary conditions. As you know, staph infections are highly contagious—particularly in prison and jail settings—and may lead to serious complications such as deep abscesses, pneumonia, endocarditis, meningitis, bone infection, blood infection, and death.

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Please respond promptly to inform us of the steps your Department is taking to investigate this matter. If you require any additional information, we may be reached at (202) 393-4930, or at the address on the side of this page.

Sincerely,

Eric Balaban

Tom Jawetz

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TREASURER



August 16, 2007

Kevin Stephens, Sr., M.D.
Director
City of New Orleans Health Department
1300 Perdido Street
New Orleans, LA 70112

Dear Dr. Stephens:

I am writing respectfully to request that the City of New Orleans Health Department conduct an immediate and thorough investigation into the apparent outbreak of staph infections at Orleans Parish Prison (OPP). Over the past several months, the American Civil Liberties Union has spoken with numerous people housed at OPP who have reportedly contracted severe staph infections in the jail. OPP currently houses approximately 2600 detainees, many of whom live in severely overcrowded and unsanitary conditions. As you know, staph infections are highly contagious—particularly in prison and jail settings—and may lead to serious complications such as deep abscesses, pneumonia, endocarditis, meningitis, bone infection, blood infection, and death.

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Please respond promptly to inform us of the steps your Department is taking to investigate this matter. If you require any additional information, we may be reached at (202) 393-4930, or at the address on the side of this page.

Sincerely,

Eric Balaban

Tom Jawetz

ACLU National Prison Project

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