

We are not a Headline. We are Your Neighbors.

An Open Letter from the Employees of Delaney Hall

We are the men and women who work at Delaney Hall. We are nurses, case managers, food service workers, maintenance staff, and security personnel. We live in Newark and the surrounding communities, and we come to work each day to do our jobs and to care for the people in our charge. We are writing because our perspective has been largely absent from the recent coverage of this facility.

In recent weeks, the demonstrations outside Delaney Hall have grown increasingly hostile toward us. We have been confronted, filmed, and verbally harassed as we arrive for and leave our shifts. Protesters have attempted to block vehicles from entering and leaving the facility, and some of us have had our personal vehicles damaged. Confrontations outside the gates escalated to the point that local authorities imposed an overnight curfew on the surrounding neighborhood. We understand that people hold strong views about immigration policy. We are not policymakers. We are employees trying to get to work safely, and the danger and intimidation directed at us have made that increasingly difficult.

Our job is to provide safe, professional, and humane care to the detainees housed at this facility, and we take that responsibility seriously. Ensuring the safety and well-being of the detainees and of one another remains our first priority. The disruption outside these walls does nothing to advance the safety of anyone inside them.

Caring for the people housed here is at the heart of what we do, and we take it personally. Medical help is available around the clock — physicians, nurses, dentists, psychologists, and psychiatrists are all part of the team — and when someone needs more than we can provide on-site, we make sure they reach specialists, imaging, emergency services, or a local hospital. We also try to look after the things that bring some normalcy and dignity to daily life: visits with family and legal counsel, whether in person or by video; access to the library and its legal resources; translation when it is needed; meals that respect people's health needs and religious practices; time for recreation; and the space to practice one's faith.

Our work is monitored by ICE, including by on-site agency personnel, and by other organizations within the Department of Homeland Security, to ensure compliance with detention standards and contract requirements. When concerns are identified, we work to resolve them promptly.

We are also members of this community. Many of us were born and raised here. Our children attend the same schools, we shop in the same stores, and we worship in the same congregations as many of the people gathered outside. We are not an abstraction in a headline. We are your neighbors, and we are proud of the work we do.

We respectfully ask that the harassment and intimidation directed at us stop, and that we be allowed to do our jobs safely and return home to our families at the end of each shift, as every worker deserves. We remain committed to providing high-quality, compassionate care to those in our charge and to serving this community with the professionalism it expects of us.

Respectfully,

The Employees of Delaney Hall



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