

Statewide Family Council Members:

We wanted to provide you some information about the Department of Corrections' response to the COVID-19 outbreak and ask for your assistance in helping to keep everyone safe and healthy.

The Department of Corrections is currently managing our facilities within existing policies and protocols we have in place to ensure the safety of all incarcerated individuals. The Department has a *communicable disease, infection prevention and immunization program* to prevent the spread of communicable and infectious disease by providing prevention, education, identification through examination of employees and incarcerated individuals suspected of having a communicable disease, surveillance, immunization, treatment, follow-up, isolation and reporting.

As a part of our routine operations to ensure the safety of incarcerated individuals utilizing existing policies and seasonal influenza protocols, all individuals received at a DOC facility, including community supervision violators, receive an initial health screening that has been updated to include the current Department of Health information on COVID-19. Our transportation units (including interstate) works with jails and other holding facilities to ensure any person we pick up to transport back to our Department is not identified as at risk for exposure. In response to the Governor Inslee's Proclamation 20-05, DOC is working with our partners, the Washington State Department of Health (DOH), the Washington State Military Department, and the State Emergency Operations Center to support the state's efforts. We are in frequent communication with officials from the DOH and are following any and all protocols.

In the event there is a need for an increased response, DOC is reviewing and revising the Department's existing Public Health Pandemic Plan. This plan provides summary information about pandemic health emergencies and recommendations and instructions for DOC facilities, offices, and other locations about managing operations during public health pandemics.

We are reminding everyone there is no need to take additional precautions beyond those you would normally take to avoid the spread of colds and viruses like influenza. These include:

- Wash hands with soap and water.
- Respiratory etiquette (coughing or sneezing into a sleeve or tissue; throwing away tissues immediately after use).
- Avoiding touching one's eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Social distancing (keeping at least 6 feet away from others) when possible.
- Environmental cleaning, especially "high-touch" surfaces, such as door knobs, keys, hand rails, telephones, keyboards, elevator and intercom buttons, etc.
- Promptly identifying and containing incarcerated individuals with influenza-like illness

- Advising employees, contract staff, volunteers, and visitors to stay home if they are sick.

We would like to ask for your assistance in keeping your friends and family members safe. If you feel sick with a fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, please do not visit or take part in a facility program or event. Any illness that is spread from person to person can develop very quickly in a correctional environment, which puts all who live, work, and visit there at risk.

Please protect yourself and others and visit when you are no longer displaying any associated symptoms. We encourage friends and family that may be sick and not able to visit to keep in contact during this time utilizing JPay, video visiting, telephone calls and mail correspondence.

We are asking for your assistance in helping us avoid exposing our facilities, our employees, other visitors, and the incarcerated population to any contagious disease. You may be asked by visiting employees if you are currently sick, have recently travelled overseas, or otherwise considered high-risk per DOH guidelines. If so, you may be denied visitation.

Thank you so much for helping us contribute to the public health response to COVID-19 to keep everyone safe and healthy.

Tomas Fithian
Department of Corrections
Pandemic Response Incident Commander