



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**  
**Washington State Penitentiary**

1313 North 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue – Walla Walla, Washington 99362 (509) 525-3610

November 22, 2020

**TO:** All Incarcerated  
Washington State Penitentiary

**FROM:** Chris Bowman, Associate Superintendent   
Washington State Penitentiary

**SUBJECT: First Incarcerated Patient at WSP dies of COVID-19**

On Saturday, November 21, 2020, an incarcerated patient at the Washington State Penitentiary, passed away due to COVID-19 related issues. Michael Cornethan, 62 years of age, had been transported to a local medical facility on November 20, 2020 for treatment of COVID-19 and other health related issues where he remained until the time of his passing. Mr. Cornethan had been housed in Victor Unit prior to his passing.

The Medium Security Units are currently on quarantine status to further contain the spread of COVID-19 across the incarcerated population and staff. As you are aware, in August we began COVID-19 testing of all employees on a weekly basis and have tested all of the incarcerated individuals housed at the Medium Security Complex.

The Department of Corrections is saddened by this loss. The health and safety of our incarcerated individuals, staff and the community remain our top priority.

The facility currently has:

- 38 confirmed cases of COVID-19 among staff, and 110 confirmed cases among the incarcerated population, as of November 21, 2020;
- 117 individuals in isolation, meaning the individuals have symptoms and are separated from healthy people, as of November 21, 2020; and,
- 559 individuals in quarantine as of November 21, 2020, meaning they were exposed but do not have symptoms and are separated from healthy people.

The Washington Department of Corrections continues to follow the established COVID-19 screening, testing and infection control guidelines as the Department works to contain and mitigate any spread of the virus.