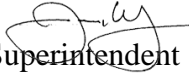




STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
AIRWAY HEIGHTS CORRECTIONS CENTER
P.O. Box 1899, Airway Heights, WA 99001

December 6, 2020

TO: All Airway Heights Staff
FROM: James Key, Superintendent 
SUBJECT: Airway Heights Update re: COVID-19 Outbreak

I wanted to thank each and every one of you for your amazing work and commitment to helping us through this very busy and difficult time. On Sunday, November 29, 2020 AHCC had its first confirmed case of COVID-19 within our incarcerated population. Over the last week, additional positive COVID-19 cases have been identified.

As you are aware all living units in the main institution are on restricted movement. There is a cohorting schedule for dayroom, shower/bathroom access and phones. These efforts are meant to minimize the short and long-term impact to our operations and mitigate the spread of the disease.

We have also relocated general population individuals to the recreation building in order to create the space necessary for the management of isolation/quarantine beds in N-Unit. While doing this we identified a growing need to create additional alternate housing areas for our COVID-19 positive patients. To address this need we transformed the gym and weight deck into an alternate housing area for asymptomatic COVID-19 positive patients. The Regional Care Facility (RCF) will continue to house symptomatic COVID-19 positive patients.

Following DOC Screening, Testing, and Infection Control Guidelines, we have been COVID-19 testing incarcerated individuals in the main institution. We expect to complete testing of remaining individuals by December 6, 2020. After receiving the results from the first series of tests, a second round of testing will begin.

Another challenge we have faced is the loss of incarcerated workers in our Correctional Industries (CI) areas due to our restricted movement. AHCC CI plays a significant role in the manufacturing and distribution of food and distribution of commissary statewide, along with providing laundry and food service locally. The current restrictions and resulting loss of workers have impacted CI's operations. I want to thank all the volunteers and the valiant work that Barb Arnett, CI Manager, and her team for all they have done to keep these areas working and producing essential services. It should also be noted that the CI operations are receiving assistance from MSU workers, including

those assigned to Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Thank you to Mark Klemme, DNR Camp Manager, for releasing the DNR workers to assist CI. The teamwork between departments has been monumental in assuring our essential services continue.

As we move forward with our response to the current COVID-19 outbreak, our Incident Command Post (ICP) will be open 7-days a week. You will also see us moving forward with plans for additional alternate housing areas to help manage any additional positive, isolation, or quarantine cases that might occur in the coming weeks.

I ask for your continued commitment to following all of the safety protocols we have in place. Continue to wear the appropriate PPE while at work, socially distance yourselves from one another and practice good hand hygiene. Please continue to show patience and understanding through these times and work towards finding solutions. We have an awesome team for which I am very proud. I am confident in your abilities to manage incidents, as indicated in the past when you have shown your resilience in getting through hard times.

Thank you for your commitment and dedication to each other.