



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
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December 30, 2020

TO: All AHCC Staff
FROM: James Key, Superintendent
SUBJECT: COVID-19 Update and Facility Movements Information

Recently there have been a number of questions and frustrations regarding the lack of information about why individuals are moved from one area to another during our response to the COVID-19 outbreak. I wanted to take the time to explain why the moves take place and the importance of following isolation and quarantine protocols.

Facility wide testing of the incarcerated population is based on a schedule, typically every seven (7) days. When test results are received, the priority is separating incarcerated individuals who have tested positive from those who have not tested positive. This includes the separation of any individuals whose test results have been found to be inconclusive.

The purpose of separating positive individuals from negative individuals is to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 within the facility. The operational process of separating positive and negative individuals is more challenging to communicate. When test results are received, we evaluate the available bed space for medical isolation and quarantine, and determine the best placement based on the capacity of the housing area. Sometimes this results in placing or removing individuals from multiple areas in order to make room for these placements. Placements are determined by test results and Health Services assessments.

Ideally, we would be able to communicate changes before they happen. However, test results are received throughout the day and planning the necessary moves in response to the results begins immediately. These plans are very fluid and can change quickly, which makes communication of accurate updates difficult. We understand this creates frustrations and confusion for both our incarcerated population and our staff.

Currently, the rate of positive test results has dropped significantly and our testing forecast is not indicating a high volume of positive test results in the future. This means we should start to see a large number of COVID-19 recovered individuals. There are also individuals who have tested negative for COVID-19 and we must continue to keep them safe and healthy. Once there are full living units of individuals who have recovered, healthy individuals may also be placed in these units without increased risk of infection.

Over the course of these next two (2) weeks you will begin to see a gradual return to a new normal operations for AHCC. Part of the new normal operations includes reviewing the lists of recovered individuals and getting them back into their previously held jobs. We will

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also begin moving individuals back into their original units and when possible their original cells. As individuals housed in the alternate housing areas are removed from quarantine or medical isolation status, they may also return to their original units. This process will take time and is dependent on the recovery rate of all areas in the main institution. Due to the timeframe of the Minimum Security Unit outbreak, the process might take a little longer, but never the less, it will happen.

This has been a long road for all of us. There have been a number of challenges, but we are seeing the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel. It is my hope that as we start a new year we will have the opportunity to begin putting this difficult time behind us and move on to better things. Thank you for your understanding and patience through this process.