

Local Family Council COVID-19 Informational Call Notes

Call Details

Facility: AHCC

Date and Time: 08/12/2020, 2:00PM

Attendees

- Kay Heinrich, Associate Superintendent
- Caitlin Robertson, OCO
- Anna Epley, Secretary
- Page Perkinson, HQ
- Beth Ann Daigre, LFC Member
- Christina Current, LFC Member
- April Chavez, LFC Member
- Ellen Hargrove, LFC Member
- James Key, Superintendent
- Robert Herzog, Assistant Deputy Secretary of Prisons
- Donna Jaramillo, Family Secretary
- Anita Barker, Family Co-Chair
- Julianne Presson, LFC Member
- Bill Hargrove, LFC Member
- Rachel Bisbee, LFC Member
- Yoshi Garcia, LFC Member

Weekly Update from Superintendent James Key

- We have 5 individuals in the RCF in the shedding phase, 1 in the infirmary, 1 on hospital watch, and 3 in isolation.
- I want to speak about our meeting last week. I want to remind everyone that people have passion and worries about their loved ones that are incarcerated. We need to respect each other during the calls with our “new normal” and keep the questions and answers for only COVID-19 related information.
- We received (1) one grievance for MAIN regarding T-Unit. No grievances for MSU.
- There were no pre-submitted questions sent in this week. Just a reminder to get those questions in before noon on Tuesday.
- Special guest Rob Herzog is going to be joining us for this meeting today

Update from Assistant Deputy Secretary of Prisons Rob Herzog

- We are close to 170 days managing the pandemic and understand the angst and worries of the public and families. We continue to look for guidance from the experts in the field and work in conjunction with our HQ doctors. In my 38 year career, the protocols that have been provided and set in place regarding social distancing with staff and incarcerated population are unprecedented. I am proud of the overall response by employees and incarcerated individuals.
- I understand how important face-to-face visits are with their family members. Two days ago, a group was formed compiled of individuals from multiple facilities to discuss how DOC can accommodate visiting with the proper protocols such as social distancing, masks, screening upon entering the facility, cleanliness of visiting room and the children’s area. DOC is wanting to get back to some form of visiting and trying to figure out what that will look like. DOC will be behind the Governor’s Safe Start Plan by approximately 3-4 weeks. The increase in COVID-19 positive individuals in our communities does affect our facilities and plays a big part in this timeline.
- Positive Cases and outbreak information at different facilities throughout the state:
 - 61 men were infected at Monroe Correctional Facility with our first outbreak
 - 2 Incarcerated Individuals and 1 staff member passed away due to complications from COVID-19.
 - Outbreak at Coyote Ridge Correctional Center was the most logistically challenging in his 38 years with DOC.

- There is serial COVID-19 testing facility wide at CRCC and tests occur every 7 days. There were no refusals on being COVID-19 tested by either staff or Incarcerated Individuals.
- There was an additional, smaller outbreak at MCC that's now under control.
- Currently there is an outbreak at Washington State Penitentiary. We have begun serial testing the folks who are in minimum security and working on ensuring that all individuals are able to social distance and have a place to recover if they become ill.
- The total number of positive COVID-19 cases is starting to dwindle down.
- The implementation of new practices across the state has helped to slow the spread.
- In regards to the budget:
 - OFM has asked for 15% of the budget to be cut.
 - Staff have been experiencing temporary layoffs.
 - Currently HQ is working on submitting a proposal to the OFM about the possibility of reducing the average daily prison population. This will also coincide with reducing the amount of folks on the community correction side as well.
 - We are actively trying to figure out ways to cut costs.

Pre-Submitted Questions

No Pre-Submitted Question

Additional Questions

Question

Talking about budgeting and the reduction in population, I was reading online and wondered if that has a lot to do with non-violent offenders and are they ever going to be viewed by WA One as individuals rather than by their crime and conviction alone? Will this come into play with access for all kinds of things?

Answer

Yes, both will come into play while looking at their level of risk. WA One assessments look at individual risk assessment on each person.

Question

Are you teaming up with OCO to formulate a plan to allow more releases as a way to reduce spending?

Answer

No plan has been implemented by our agency at this time other than being directed to reduce the budget by 15%. What is needed for this to be done is up to the legislature, not at the agency level. I encourage you to contact your Legislature and voice your concerns.

Question

Who will be the first to receive a vaccine once it available? Will the more vulnerable populations go first?

Answer

No discussion on how the vaccine will be distributed has been had yet. I am not involved in any conversation regarding this in corrections, in our state, or the nation on prioritization of vaccines.

Question

Has there been any discussion on outdoor visiting?

Answer

Yes, it is a part of the workgroups discussion. Some facilities have the option for outside visiting more than others.

Question

Will visiting include EFV's as well in the discussion?

Answer

No, EFVs will be the last element of visiting due to social distancing needing to occur from arrival to the very end of the visit upon leaving the facility.

Question

I have questions regarding the data on the DOC website under the individuals testing column. What does that number represent, individuals tested or how many tests were completed?

Answer

Regarding the difference between individuals tested and number of tests, I will have to take that back to our EOC (Emergency Operations Center) to help with the confusion on what we are trying to communicate to you and the public.

- LFC Member: Not misunderstanding of the data but the numbers are inaccurate.
- Paige Perkinson: Headquarters is trying to find a way to better distinguish this and add definitions for clear reading and understanding.
- Rob Herzog: As Prison Director, my main concern is that I want to know how many test positive.

Question

If an individual is tested and goes through isolation and the shedding process and are tested positive again, does that count as a new one?

Answer

For example, if you test positive in April and then again months later, it would be counted as two positives in the same exposure.

Question

Regarding opening up new positions and opportunities for K-Unit incarcerated, does that also go for offenders in other units?

Answer

Regarding the gratuity, the question last week only referenced K-Unit. We have a group that started this week to work on programming options such as SOTAP and have some opportunities for individuals to work by passing out commissary in K-Unit.

Comments/Closing

Be safe, wear your mask, and please have your questions turned in by noon on Tuesday