

Local Family Council COVID-19 Informational Call Notes

Call Details

Facility: AHCC

Date and Time: February 16, 2022, 2:00 – 3:00 PM

Attendees

- Kay Heinrich, Associate Superintendent
- Justin Gudvangen, RN4
- Paige Perkinson, HQ
- Katie Pavao, CPPC
- Ellen Hargrove, LFC Family Co-Chair
- Donna Jaramillo, LFC Family Secretary
- Julie Burden, LFC Member
- Anita Barker, LFC Member
- Bill Hargrove, LFC Member
- James Key, Superintendent
- Caitlin Robertson, OCO
- Monica Ritter, HQ
- Stella Spracklin, OCO
- Brittany Roberts, LFC Member
- Kimberly Rapp, LFC Member
- Valerie Smith, LFC Member
- Juanita Rodriguez, LFC Member
- April Chavis, LFC Member

If you would like your friend/family member/loved one to be a part of the Local Family Council, please have them write to Ally Ross at the following email address:

anally.ross@doc1.wa.gov

OR

**Ally Ross, Administrative Assistant
Airway Heights Corrections Center
PO BOX 1899
Airway Heights, WA 99001**

To be part of the Local Family Council, one must be on the Incarcerated Individual's approved visitation list, and "any approved visitor in good standing may attend" (policy 530.155). If one is not on the incarcerated individuals's visitation list and wishes to fill out an application to become a visitor, please go to the following website:

- <https://www.doc.wa.gov/corrections/incarceration/visiting/prison-visits.htm>
- **Questions need to be submitted to Ms. Ross by noon on the Tuesday before the meeting. Please keep your questions, pre-submitted and during the call, to COVID-19 related topics.**
- Please keep each question concrete and specific via bullet statements.

Weekly Update from Superintendent James Key

- Numbers as of 12:30 PM **per the website:**
 - AHCC I/I new positive cases in the last 30 days – 1,110
 - AHCC I/I confirmed cases to date – 2,925
 - AHCC Staff confirmed cases to date – 534
 - AHCC I/I deaths to date – 4
 - AHCC I/I in the RCF – 10

Pre-Submitted Questions

Question

We are frustrated-our son was in L unit has had Covid a year ago and recovered and fully vaccinated. Why has he been moved to the gym again for the 2nd time? At this point if he gets Covid again he will most likely not be very ill again. He has very little contact with us-no email, no USPS mail, phone calls rarely? I just don't understand why unvaccinated and vaccinated are separated to begin with-those recovered and vaccinated should be good to go-just like those of us outside the prison walls.

Answer

We cannot comment on the status of individual patients, but we can say that the Main Institution Gym area is a designated isolation area in which we place individuals who have tested positive. We are required to separate, as quickly as possible, any individuals who have tested positive. The vaccination status of an individual does not determine a person's placement, only their testing results. In the gym areas individuals are allowed regular access to phones and there is the opportunity for mail, just like in any living unit.

Question

Wondering why there isn't special visits during this time? Not that many were ever visiting (3-4) at any given time? Visiting is so good for the moral of the families and the incarcerated.

Answer

Per HQ, Visiting has been closed since January 10th with the new round of outbreaks. This is for the protection for everyone.

Question

Will the N95 masks still be available for the inmates?

Answer

The access to N95 respirators is a HQ level decision and not a local decision.

- **Update: We are providing voluntary N95 masks to the population.**

Question

It is very difficult to hear incarcerated individuals on the portable telephone. At times the phone becomes silent and other times there is a loud rustling sound. Most of the phone calls have these audio issues. I believe the cause is the plastic bag in which the phone is placed. Can this be examined and remedied?

Answer

Unfortunately, due to safety issues associated with cross contamination, this is the only alternative we have at this point in time.

Question

If K Unit is still on quarantine, why are I/I workers deemed essential allowed to go to work in the kitchen, food factory, laundry, etc.?

Answer

The only individuals who are allowed out of K-Unit are those who are currently recovered from COVID and are assigned as workers in Correctional Industries. Those individuals who are quarantined are not allowed out of the unit or their cells except during their assigned cohort times.

Question

Why can't the I/I in K unit be allowed in the dayroom and yard?

Answer

The only individuals who are allowed out of K-Unit are those who are currently recovered from COVID and are assigned as workers in Correctional Industries. Those individuals who are quarantined are not allowed out of the unit or their cells except during their assigned cohort times.

Additional Questions

Question

How are we doing on food distribution for evening meals? R unit meals sat for quite a bit and were served cold.

Answer

This is the first we have heard of this, but we will look into this. We are getting meals out as fast as we can.

- **Update: Dinner was late due to a recount of the unit.**

Question

It seems there is inconsistency with how movements are being handled. For example, two individuals both have 3 negative tests each, yet one individual has been in quarantine for 32 days, yet the other individual has been moved twice in the last 10 days

Answer

Mr. Gudvangen: At this point we don't have any living areas cleared off quarantine, everyone is still being tested. The ones who got covid and have cleared are the only ones being moved. If someone was infected, then recovered then they would be removed from quarantine. Each individual status will be different and when each unit was put on quarantine started will affect this.

Question

Why are we constantly moving negative individuals? Why are some I/I moved more or less than others?

Answer

Mr. Gudvangen: Moves were directed by HQ had to do with making more isolation space available. As the cases exceeded our beds, we needed to make more room, in that process certain living units had to be cleared out.

Supt. Key: Recovered individuals can be placed anywhere in the institution. It's about finding beds for individuals who have been recovered. This is where some of the moves are coming from as well. Each individual and unit have many variables.

Question

Are any of the EFV's being used to house I/I?

Answer

No, only the gym in the MSU and MAIN (alternative housing) and RCF (Regional Care Facility) are being used for alternative housing.

Question

Could someone explain the COVID channel 8 video. Are the EFV donated movies being used for channel 8?

Answer

We have been running movies on that channel for almost 2 years. New movies are rotated out each week, many of these are donated and movies and DVD players are in alternate housing areas and rotated each week.

Question

Can I send you the names before I purchase and donate them to make sure they are approved?

Answer

Yes. These have to follow the production companies that the contract allows therefore limiting some of the movies we can accept.

Question

The I/I who have recovered and are working for CI and going back to a unit on quarantine, I realize someone who has had covid can be reinfected. Those I/I working at the kitchen and could be exposed to someone who has covid and could bring it back to the unit. Is there testing happening to prevent this?

Answer

Mr. Gudvangen: Before they are cleared, they must pass a rapid test. If they pass this means the infection is gone. Once infected and recovered they are generally safe between 90 days up to 6 months.

Question

Are the I/I tested on a regular basis before work?

Answer

Only the I/I living on open bay units are tested regularly. Any staff who come onsite are testing twice a week.

Question

Many other facilities are progressing more quickly than AHCC. Other facilities are allowed to have their I/I for five hours a day, and ours are only out for an hour to shower and if they have a visit. Where are we at with trying to align with other facilities and moving forward? This is causing Mental Health issues with the I/I and how is this being addressed.

Answer

Mr. Gudvangen: Other facilities had outbreaks earlier than we did, we were the last facility to start having an outbreak. Those facilities have worked through the same processes we have. There is no way to predict when this will be over.

Supt. Key: We have the chaplain and mental health counselors communicating with the I/I population. A lot of the community numbers affect this as well. The other institutions have been where we are now. Our numbers are getting better, once the numbers are good enough we will start opening things and giving yard times and more open times. Why we have more numbers, is based on the community, vaccination rates, but I can't give you one reason on why this is.

Question

Do you have 100% certainty that an individual who has recovered from this round of COVID is not going to reinfect and therefore transmit the virus to fellow inmates?

Answer

Mr. Gudvangen: Nothing in medicine is 100%. But we are taking the appropriate measures from the direction of HQ and DOH. CDC provides information to local health officials for us.

Question

Is the DOC kiosk in each unit available to the I/I currently?

Answer

Correction: Kiosks are not available currently, except for syncing JPay tablets.

Question

When Delta was strong last year the minimum amount of time was 30 min out per day. How come with this variant the amount of time allowed out is 10 min every other day for a total of 30 min a week? Even in solitary confinement they are allowed out 1 hour each 24 hours.

Answer

Associate Heinrich: This is dependent on how the units are cohorted and whether the unit is on quarantine or isolation status.

Supt. Key: The current cohort schedule is not different from round one. The schedule depends on whether it is under isolation or quarantine. Based on the protocols to move forward and fight COVID this is what we are following.

Question

Are there updated numbers from the memo that went out on the 14th, as far as current active cases? The memo on the 14th said there were 245 active cases.

Answer

The numbers given today are the accurate numbers on the website as of the 2/16/22.

Question

Is there an inventory of the movies that AHCC currently has, so we are not buying duplicate DVD's?

Answer

Yes. Sometimes having duplicates isn't too bad. When EFV's are up and running we can place the same movie in multiple areas. If you send me (Associate Heinrich) an email of what you would like to donate, we can check the inventory.

Question

Could you send us a copy of the inventory?

Answer

We have over 1200 DVDs, so I'm not sure that's the most efficient process.

Question

Is the laundry schedule running more like normal?

Answer

Yes, the schedule is back on track similar to a normal schedule.

Question

There are many people who cannot participate on the weekly calls. Could we look into having a onetime meeting with staff and HQ where other AHCC families could join on?

Answer

Associate Heinrich: We are required to have one meeting a week, family members can go onto the website as the notes and responses are posted each week if someone is not available to make these calls.

Supt. Key: We are exploring different venues with HQ to allow more individuals to participate in the weekly meetings. There may be information in the future regarding this. I appreciate the question of having more people involved.

Question

How close is that process set to happen? 2 weeks? 2 months? What can we do in the meantime to get families informed and involved?

Answer

We are actively working on a process to allow more visitors to be involved on this call. We have the minutes that are posted, and I'm hoping to have a process in the next few weeks collaboratively with HQ. As soon as we have it ready to go, we will present it to the group.

Question

How are we doing on the mail back up out of the mailroom?

Answer

To my understanding we are not backed up. We have increased staff to assist with this process.

Question

If a book came in on the 5th of February what is the time frame for it to be received?

Answer

A book comes through property; this will be a different protocol than the mailroom and what status the unit is under. We can check into the timeframe.

- **Update: The timeframe depends on the unit and stats if the I/I. Currently there is no specific timeframe.**

Question

Yesterday in a phone call with my husband, he called 3 times and I was not able to hear him once. I believe he could hear me. It may not be the plastic on the phones but maybe the phone range or batteries? This was the first time I could not hear him at all.

Question

We did have issues with batteries, but then we made sure each unit had extra batteries, the connection problem previously was fixed. We can check on this.

- **Update: This issue has been forwarded to the internal investigation unit (IIU) who are responsible for the phones to review.**

Question

Comparing this outbreak to this time last year, there seems to be a lot of similarities as far as movement and the rise in cases. Is there anything being done to prevent this in the future?

Question

Mr. Gudvangen: We are trying to prevent COVID as much as we can and be as proactive as quickly as possible. The ability to do rapid tests this year has been very helpful as we did not have that last year. This has been key for us to be able to test and get results faster. I understand the numbers look different, last year the infection rate was 1 person infected can affect up to 2 people, this variant it's 1:5. This is a much more infectious strain, but since we have access to better testing this has been helpful for mitigation. We haven't had severely ill cases this variant, most of the population is not having symptoms. The vaccines were pushed to decreased deaths and populations in hospitals.

Associate Heinrich: Incarcerated individuals and/or staff are not as sick as last year due to the vaccinations, therefore the recovery time has been quicker.

Supt. Key: The sanitation has never stopped as well. We are still doing this rigorously.

Comments/Closing

I'm hopeful, the numbers are going in the right direction and hopeful this will continue. I want to get off outbreak status for MAIN and MSU and get back to programming and to what a new normal looks like. Thank you for the questions, please have those in by Tuesday at 12. Thank you for your time.