

Local Family Council COVID-19 Informational Call Notes

Call Details

Facility: Coyote Ridge Corrections Center

Date and Time: 7/30/2020, 1200pm

Attendees

- **Local Family Council Members**

- **DOC Staff:**

Jeff Uttecht, Superintendent

Michelle Duncan, Assoc. Superintendent

Paige Perkinson, Engagement and Outreach PS4

Lori Wonders, Public Information Officer

Kate Jansen, Administrative Assistant 3

Tim Taylor, Health Services Manager

Rob Herzog, Prisons Director

- **OMBUDS**

Caitlin Robertson, Assistant Ombuds

- Please note:

- Questions for upcoming meetings are to be emailed to Kate Jansen at catherine.jansen@doc1.wa.gov no later than 8:00am Wednesday. It is important that we received questions in advance to provide us time to research the answer. Not receiving questions may create a delay in a response.
 - All questions received afterwards will be held over to the next week or if time allows asked during the end of the conference call.
 - All questions sent to our staff before the informational sharing phone call during the week, will be answered on the Friday phone calls or forwarded onto DOCCOVID19@DOC.WA.GOV for appropriate response.

- Additional guidelines:

- Meeting time will be one (1) hour.
- We will answer all the questions first and open up for questions/comments afterwards.
- If any questions are left unanswered at the end of the meeting, we will add them to the next meeting.
- Please ensure your phones are on mute.
- Please provide your name before asking a question or responding.

- **Please do not share COVID-19 informational call phone-In Information with others, especially via social media.**

- If you, or you know someone that has a loved one at CRCC and would like to be added to the LFC list to receive call in information, meeting minutes and other correspondence the facility may send out please send an email to catherine.jansen@doc.wa.gov or miduncan@doc1.wa.gov.

Weekly Update

Testing

Staff – CRCC continues to test all CRCC staff weekly. We have 69 staff members that have tested positive during the COVID 19 pandemic.

Incarcerated Individuals

Current population:

Positive: 232

Currently in RCF/MCC: Approximately 19, 9 returning Friday and 6 scheduled to return next week.

In hospital: 0

Isolation: 14

Quarantine: 11

Recovered: 212

MI3 Operations – I, G, H, F Units

MI3 unit operations has increased to allow for a larger cohorts, 5 cells at a time and for one hour in duration. They also have the 30 minute outside walking time, one unit per day and will rotate.

This operational period will run until Friday 07/31/20 and will be reevaluated at that time.

Alternate Housing Location

Currently we have no incarcerated individuals housed in Alternative Housing. Tents are being removed from CRCC yards. The Recreation Department and Religious Activity Center are remaining as alternate housing options.

Medium Unit Operations – B, C, D, E Units.

There has been no changes to the medium unit operations. All medium units are allowed out of their cells for 2.5 hours a day, on a rotational basis. They are also given 30 minute outside time for walking every other day and will be going to the dining rooms to pick up their meals.

Pre-Exposed Questions

There were no questions sent in for this call.

Update from Rob Herzog

Mr. Herzog presented an overview of the statewide response to COVID-19. He discussed the outbreak at Coyote Ridge and believe that CRCC is over the hump now. Three RCF's have opened across the state at Airway Heights, Monroe Correctional Complex, and Women's Correctional Center for Women.

He stated that we are serial testing all the staff at Coyote Ridge, and also doing serial testing at Monroe, and implementing that for WSP. Due to the increased number of tests, it is increasing the time to get test results back.

Mr. Herzog reported that he has spent a lot of his time with the executive strategy team in regards to a 15% budget cost. Cost has reduced our cuts and sent that to the Office of Financial Management. As we all know

that the state is in a significant budget crisis. It is unfortunate, but he stated that we will have to decrease costs. The biggest goal is that we maintain operations.

In regards to getting back to a new normal, that will look a lot different than it does now. The most significant question is, “when will we get back visiting?” Mr. Herzog stated that Headquarters does not have an answer for that at this time. The Department has a phased approach, much like one for the community, and our goal is to resume visiting come Phase 3. The Department will normally wait a few weeks after the community, just to see if there is a spike in cases, as to assess whether it is safe to resume visiting. This is due to the fact that staff and visitors are interacting with those in the community. We can expect visiting to look significantly different. It is the Department’s desire to get there as safely as possible.

Mr. Herzog also stated with the significant change in movement; with many of the population are on restricted movement, there is less time for them to move around within their dayrooms. DOC is aware that this creates more agitation and more anxiety and can create more violence within our prisons. The Department hasn’t seen any significant increase in violence, except for a few isolated incidents, within any of our institutions. What it has seen is an increase in the amount of discovery of contraband. The facilities will continue to combat that.

Mr. Herzog stated that it is our goal to continue to follow protocols and procedures and get back to regular operations as smoothly and safely as possible.

Additional Questions

Question 1

Is the introduction of contraband with the staff?

Answer

There are a number of ways that contraband can be introduced. We have seen people try to throw it over fences, we discover it through our mailroom. Unfortunately, we also see it through our internal investigations with our staff.

Question 2

What is your position again?

Answer

I am the Prison Director for the state of Washington.

Question 3

We have heard that transfer to the camp have been suspended by Headquarters, but we have heard that there is a bus coming into camp at Coyote Ridge. Can you explain that?

Answer

At the beginning of the pandemic, alternate housing within our camps was created and reduced the population by close to half to allow for social distancing. The system however was created to move people through it. The jails continue to send us people that are sentenced to prison. If we didn’t move them, we would be too populated at our reception center at Shelton and Purdy. If they are being transferred they have already completed a fourteen day quarantine. Our biggest concern is those coming from the community and entering into the prison system.

Question 5

California is offering good time to those in exchange for the hardships they have experienced. Will you be giving them something similar?

Answer

They will continue to get custody based off the points that they earn. Those points are earned based on behavior. The actual movement is dependent on the capacity of the facility. We have a waiting list at most of our institutions.

Question 6

So the beds will be continued to be used by those coming in?

Answer

Yes, some of them will have to be.

Question 7

There was an RCW passed for 50% for non-violent. Has this been implemented?

Answer

That would need to be a statutory change. The amount of time taken or given on a sentence is determined by statute. I am not aware of any change.

Question 8

Are you aware that the families are asking for a meeting with the executive team at Headquarters?

Answer

I have heard talk of this but as far as I know, no meeting is being planned.

Question 9

Why can't the DOC be testing staff at all twelve prisons?

Answer

If we have an outbreak, we will move to testing at all 12 prisons. We are also implementing testing at three prisons. The problem with testing, is that if I were to take the test, and then it takes seven days to process, I may not have had the virus, but I have caught it within the last seven days. While it is a precaution, it isn't a catch all.

Question 10

Every day we have to screen our staff, why isn't that something that can be done for the staff?

Answer

Every staff member, any person in fact, that enters a facility is screened to include having their temperature checked.

Question 11

So your point about the reliability of testing, are there any other measures that the employees are going to do? What are some other measures that can be implemented?

Answer

We do have Wellness Committees at our facilities, and they do educate our staff on how to best take care of themselves. We also do what we call a "bubble wrap". This means that there are specific dedicated number of employees to a location. This mitigates the spreading of the virus.

Question 12

We have been told almost every week that staff can't work in one specific area. Why is that not something that we can implement at Coyote Ridge?

Answer

We only have so many staff. That means that we have to have a specific number of staff for each location; which we might not have enough staff for. We also have to keep in mind the number of staff that get screened out or mapped out.

Question 13

So that is only for specific high risk areas?

Answer

Yes, we have implemented that in specific units.

Question 14

When will you be changing the visitation plan to open?

Answer

I have been asked that question a few times. The challenge to that is that visitors come to that institution from all over the state. That means that someone from another part of the state could potentially be spreading it throughout the state.

Question 15

So why not start there? Why not allow those that are within the same county visit their loved ones?

Answer

It could be a start. That will be something that I pass on.

Question 16

There are three facilities that haven't had any cases, either incarcerated individual or staff, and they haven't reopened. The counties are in Phase 3, but the visitation hasn't reopened.

Answer

Yes, I understand. We do watch what is happening in other states. However, we do have to take into consideration what is happening in Washington. Our decisions are based on Washington State data.

Question 17

When we start visitation again, what will that look like? How do you picture visitation happening?

Answer

In the past, I know there have been options that have been discussed. Some of those include reducing the length of the visits so that more can visit on each day. We are still discussion what that could look like in the future.

Question 18

Can you please tell us when you plan to reinstate the video visits?

Answer

We haven't un-instated the video visits.

Question 19

They have at CRCC.

Answer

Jeff can brief me on the situation after the call and we will discuss that.

Question 20

You had said that the 30 minutes was part of their one hour, or is that now an hour and a half?

Answer

It is one full hour. They can choose to spend their 30 minutes in the dayroom, or 30 minutes outside walking.

Question 21

Can we talk about getting video visits back please?

Answer

We will resume video visits when we feel that it is safe to do so. It is one of our top priorities. We are still on a restricted movement, which makes it very difficult for us to do video visiting.

Question 22

Are the tents going to Monroe?

Answer

I believe they are going back to the vender that rented them to us.

Question 23

They were going to do an upgrade on JPay. Has that happened yet?

Answer

Not yet. That depends on who wins the contract. That will probably happen here soon.

Question 24

Do the guys in isolation get something to help clean themselves? I asked this question a few times on these calls, and I never got clarification.

Answer

I put the clarification in the notes last week. Yes, they do get towel to clean themselves.

Question 25

Can you clarify who was incoming transfer from Shelton?

Answer

They are all new coming into the system at MI2 custody.

Question 26

I hear that there are officers that aren't wearing masks, it seems like there are no repercussions for them. Why is that?

Answer

Masks are mandatory for those who live here and work here. If we have someone who is refusing to comply then we do need to do something about that. I am not aware of anyone that has flat out refused to wear a mask.

Question 27

Michael has actually filed a grievance about that, and the response came back as not grievable.

Answer

We will look into that. This is a grievable issue.

Question 28

Is there any staff that don't have to wear a mask due to health conditions?

Answer

We are not aware of any staff member at Coyote Ridge that has a medical condition that prohibits them from wearing a mask.

Question 29

I have heard from my brother that there is an officer that hasn't been wearing his mask. Can you look into that as well?

Answer

We need to have a complaint. It is much easier to investigate when we have details of the incident.

Question 30

We have been really patient when it comes to the protocols. Can we please get an answer in regards to video visits?

Answer

We will let you know when that is being planned.

Question 31

Why can't our loved ones use their hour out for video visits?

Answer

That has to be scheduled, we don't know when that specific area will be let out, etc. That is just not manageable in regards to video visits. We had Mr. Kinne on the call about a week ago, if you read the notes, it might give you a better idea as to the challenges around that.

Question 31

When you guys are considering your plan for the MI3, is that going to be a phased thing?

Answer

Yes, that is exactly what we are doing. We are moving very slow. The doctors are concerned about potentially having another flare up of the virus. We are taking this a step at a time. We don't want to risk the chance of having another outbreak.

- Thank you for joining us. Next week's call will be Thursday August 6th at 0900.