

Local Family Council COVID-19 Informational Call Notes

Call Details

Facility: Monroe Correctional Complex

Date and Time: 10/2/20, 1:00 PM

Attendees

- Lynn Barker
- Karen Cain
- Felix D'Allesandro
- Caryl Darby
- Diane Durall
- Angela Hinton
- Josephine Johnson
- Stephanie Meadows
- Diane Pasta
- Rob Tarver
- Joanne Todd
- Carol Welch
- Danielle White
- Ina McNeese
- Mark Miller
- Karen Hayden
- Leslie O'Connor
- John Padilla
- Kathleen Bechler
- Matthias Gyde
- Eric Jackson

Weekly Update

We are in Week 10 of COVID testing for Staff. So far we have done 9336 (8436 correct numbers for last week!) tests on staff and contractors and there are currently no new positive or inconclusive COVID tests.

COVID Unit - We have 12 on isolation (9 are Violators, 1 from TRU and 2 from SOU). We have 2 on Quarantine, 1 of which is a Violator, and the other from WSR.

Movie Channel (SWANK) Our PPL License expired on 9/30/20. This means we are no longer allowed to show movies from SWANK until this licensure is restored. As of today, we learned the contract has been renewed, but there will be a slight break in service waiting for the new movies to be ordered and arrive.

There was some concern expressed regarding an announcement to the population that was soliciting participation from those interested, in an Angel Tree program sponsored by one of the ministries through the Chaplain's Office. The concern was that this opportunity to purchase gifts for children of the incarcerated excluded children under the age of 2.

I have asked for a copy of the announcement. The sponsor indicated to me via email that they will not exclude children under the age of 2, if the flyer has inaccurate information, we will fix it.

MCC's Kaela Chong and Heather Trenk are also doing some kind of holiday gifts for children. The information has not been posted to the population yet.

I'll be taking one week of vacation starting on Monday October 5, 2020. Captain Frantz has graciously agreed to host the LFC COVID Call on Thursday October 8, 2020. Friday October 9, 2020 is a mandatory Furlough day for many non-represented staff. This week, please send your questions to Kathleen Bechler for the Thursday call.

Pre-Submitted Questions

Question 1

Can we go over the mattress conversation further at our next meeting? It appears in my talking with my son that currently there are approx. 10 new mattresses a month coming into D Unit.

Approximately from my son's perspective, over half of the unit have mattresses that would be deemed unacceptable by Dept of Health Stds. (torn – cracked)

If half of the inmates in Unit D have sub-par mattresses what is the current plan on replacing them?

Answer

If someone has a truly unserviceable mattress, we replace it. It's true we are allowed to order 10 per month as a matter of routine, but we will not allow someone to go without. What we cannot do, is re-issue a mattress that has been replaced due to tearing.

Under pre-COVID conditions, unit staff would note poor mattress conditions during daily cell inspections, and/or routine cell searches. Now we are relying on the population to self-report. Of course, the unit Sergeant verifies a mattress is unserviceable before replacing.

In the context of allowing recycling of older mattresses for the purpose of providing "double" mattresses, the mattress will have to be free of excessive damage.

Question 2

I have a question and perhaps it's more of a suggestion:

When you mentioned that CI is making partitions for the visiting room tables, and that each visit will be a no contact visit, I was wondering about being able to hold hands.

I get the no kissing part, but if each visitor was to use hand sanitizer and the Incarcerated Individual was to use it as well at the beginning and ending of the visit, this would allow for *some* sort of physical connection for the family and their loved ones. Human touch is so very important and has many benefits.

What that would look like is; partition across the table with space (like a bank teller type of hole) for just the visitor and loved ones to hold hands.

I work in healthcare, so I understand the "no contact" visit, but I was just throwing out a suggestion for something that would allow for some physical comfort/touch for families visiting.

Answer

Our visiting room's partitions will consist of an 8 foot clear barrier that will separate you from your loved ones. When entering the VR, the incarcerated will be on one side of the barrier and Visitors on the other. The barrier extends from the floor to 8 foot.

Question 3

Do you all have an idea about how first wave visitor/loved ones will be chosen? For example, will Inmate last names be a criteria and go in alpha order so that A to H will go first and then I thru Z (not that we have many Z's) go next? I assume that WSRU visits be determined separately from TRU visits, yes?

Answer

I don't know what that will look like. There is a meeting next week to find out from Headquarters what the plan is. I'm hoping it may be electronic self-scheduling, but we will have details after next week. There will be more to come.

Question 4

I want to advocate for those visitors who come from another state or who come from a long way away in Washington State; they definitely should have extra time. I drove from my home to CRCC (four and a half hours—one way) for nearly three years, twice a month, and was grateful when the rules changed so that anybody over 250 got special visit days which meant that I got an extra day.

Answer

Distant visitors will be taken into consideration. This will also be discussed at the meeting next week. There will be more to come.

Additional Questions

Question 1 - Comment

SFC Rep Felix D'Allesandro send the LFC a letter from Deputy Director Jeneva Cotton which included restroom usage for visitors in Phase 2.

Answer

Thank you for sending that out to the council members.

Question 2

With the set-up of visiting, we will be separated from our loved ones. Will there be some kind of divider to separate us from other visitors?

Answer

I don't know exactly what that looks like yet, but I imagine there will be some kind of divider and/or social distancing established. More to come.

Question 3

When will DOC move into phase 2 of the Safe Start Plan?

Answer

It is hoped that we will be able to start before Thanksgiving, I don't have an exact date yet.

Question 4

There have been events in the visiting Room for over 70 incarcerated people. Yet visiting is going to be limited to 22 incarcerated individuals and there 2 visitors, which is only 66. Why the difference in the numbers?

Answer

There have been 2 events, one for Juneteenth and one for the Asian Pacific Islanders. In these events the participants wore masks and maintained social distancing and there were no outside guests involved. The visiting room is very large so social distancing could be maintained. There was also a wedding with 2 outside guests. The participants could not touch each other and remained 8 feet apart and wore masks, so there was no outside contact.

I hope that helps explain the difference. Once the barriers are built into the Visiting Rooms, this will impact the safe numbers allowed on each side of the barriers and support social distancing.

Question 5

When you get the information about the Angel Tree gifts for children under 2 years old, will be past the date for signing up as we didn't know they would give gifts to the younger children. Will they still be able to sign up?

Answer

I will reach out and find out.

Question 6

Can they sign up to get the presents from Angel Tree as well as the ones from MCC?

Answer

Yes, you will be able to sign up for both.

Comments/Closing

Next week's teleconference will be on Thursday, October 8th. Please send your questions to Kathleen Bechler.

An email went out for nominations for next year's Local Family Council Officers.

Thanks everyone. Have a good weekend.