

Questions for SFC call 04/10/2020

Some questions were grouped together as they were asked by more than one person.
If specific questions about individuals were asked, they were removed.
If you have specific questions about your loved one, please contact your local facility.

PLEASE NOTE:

Please do not share Local Family Council or Statewide Family Council Informational Calls Phone-In Information with others, especially via social media.

These are internal DOC communication lines, and are not for public posting.

PRESENT ON CALL:

Jeneva Cotton, Statewide DOC Co-Chair - Facilitator
Suzanne Cook, Statewide Family Co-Chair
Rhonda Roberts, Statewide DOC Secretary
Loretta Pederson, Statewide Family Secretary
AHCC: Yoshi Garcia
CCCC: Leslie Redic
LCC: Stephanie Sanderson
MCC: Felix D'Allesandro
MCCCW: Melody Simle
SCCC: Susan Cooksey
WCC: Dora Dura-Rahemaah Williams
WCCW: Jason Rice
WSP: Wendy Dubinsky
HQ: Jeremy Barclay, Paige Perkinson, Lisa Flynn, Dawn Taylor
OCO: Matthias Gyde, Caitlyn Roberston

PRE-SUBMITTED QUESTIONS

1. Will face masks now be mandatory for staff since there are more positive cases in the inmate population? Face masks for staff could help slow the spread in the institutions since staff are the only ones entering the institutions that may have also been out in the general public. ***
 - a. A memo was distributed today, April 10, 2020, requiring all persons entering any DOC location – to include HQ, prisons, field offices, work releases, CI and satellite locations to wear a face covering.
2. Why can't inmates use masks?
 - a. Incarcerated individuals are included in the Secretary's mandated use for all inside DOC locations to wear face coverings that was distributed on April 10, 2020. The Department has ordered supplies to be given to each individual to include bandanas, coffee filters, rubber bands and a tutorial.

3. Currently at WCC they are making 1700 masks per day. Why aren't they able to make masks for themselves?
 - a. The incarcerated population that you are referencing are producing face coverings, which are different than face masks. Additionally, the information we obtained from the facility said they are not producing anywhere near that number. At the time of the call, less than 100 face coverings had been made at WCC.

4. Why are they still bringing in new offenders to WCC from the county jails? They say they test them before they come in, but they don't have the test results back before they allow them to go to WCC?
 - a. The department is required by statute to intake the population from the county jails. There are enhanced active screening protocols and temperature checks that are conducted before the incarcerated individuals are transferred from the jail, and then again before they enter the DOC facility.

5. As the month of Ramadan is quickly approaching April 24th-May 24th what is it going to look like with social distancing in place?
 - a. The department is working through plans to ensure that all incarcerated individuals have the opportunity to continue practicing their faith while following social distancing recommendations. Ramadan is included in that planning. Passover was also included in that planning as well and has started.

6. With the new studies that Black/African Americans are at higher risk of Covid 19 what are you doing to protect this community and giving them the access they need?
 - a. The CDC has not provided any information that the risk itself is higher for this population. The information provided on the CDC website has stated that African-Americans tend to have higher levels of underlying health conditions, which in itself places someone at higher risk. All incarcerated individuals are receiving protections, adequate screening, and medical response as needed.

7. What is DOC's plan for immediately reinstating visiting programs once Governor Inslee lifts stay at home orders?
 - a. Governor Inslee's stay at home order does not affect the visiting programs in the facilities. At this time there is not an expected date for lifting the visitation limitations. The department will continue to evaluate visitation as we are aware it is extremely important to incarcerated individuals, but in an effort to keep the incarcerated population and staff safe and healthy we cannot lift the visitation limitations at this time.

8. Due to staff and inmates' health overall safety, has it been considered to grant early releases to inmates that have short pending sentences, health issues, and individuals with non-violent behaviors, like other countries are doing to manage CoViD situation?

- a. We addressed this on the last call, and at this time the response is the same. The Department of Corrections is evaluating the three statutorily sanctioned release options available to our agency. The three statutes for reference are [Extraordinary Medical Placement \(RCW 9.94A.728\)](#), [Graduated Reentry \(RCW 9.94A.733\)](#) and [Furloughs \(RCW 72.66\)](#).

The Department has been able to implement screening and precautionary measures to continue protecting those in our custody from the COVID-19 pandemic. For the most current information on identified cases amongst our incarcerated population throughout the Washington state correctional facilities please visit the [DOC COVID-19 webpage](#). We apologize that there is no other information available regarding the early release of incarcerated individuals, but would like to reassure you that we are taking precautionary measures to ensure the health and safety of the incarcerated population and the staff in the Washington correctional facilities.

9. Was brought to my attention that CI gave N95 masks to their employees and said they could wear them or not...but did not offer any inmates working at CI the same PPE. Why?

- a. The department is experiencing the same nationwide shortage as the general public on N95 respirators. DOC had a surplus of expired N95 respirators, which were made available to staff. Since they are expired, we cannot make it mandatory to wear them and we could not give them to the incarcerated. As noted above, incarcerated individuals are provided face coverings.

10. I would like to know why all of the animals were taken out of the facility. Is that due to Covid-19?

- a. Many facilities have temporarily suspended programs that involve dogs and cats. As most of those are volunteer-driven programs, programs have removed the animals from the facility. This is proactive planning – for instance, if someone has a cat or dog, and has to go into isolation, they cannot take the animal with them. Animals will return once facilities are back to a new normal.

11. We were told from a previous meeting that the facility emergency plans might be made available to the families. Is that still a possibility?

- a. These plans are developing constantly and for the safety of the incarcerated individuals and the staff these plans cannot be shared with the public.
12. Is there plenty of personal protective equipment to go around to everyone that is requesting it? Would DOC allow donations of PPE?
- a. The department is managing the supply available as conservatively as possible. DOC is making attempts to obtain additional PPE to help ensure the safety of the incarcerated population and the staff in the facilities. We are not accepting donations of PPE. If you have supplies, please contact the State Emergency Operations Center as they issue supplies based on need and priority, for instance to hospitals. DOC has indicated facilities could accept donations of fabric through the normal donation process.
13. Are the correctional officers taking extra precautions to ensure the safety of everyone? If so, are the day rooms being disinfected after every use?
- a. Yes, correctional officers are taking extra precautions to ensure the safety of incarcerated individuals and staff in the facilities. And yes, the day rooms are being cleaned and disinfected after every use.
14. Why can't people in isolation and quarantine use the phone?
- a. Isolation requires someone to stay in their cell, other than to go directly to the shower and return. This is to minimize as much cross-contamination as possible and reduce potential of COVID-19 spread. Our Infectious Control experts maintain that common areas, including phones, are NOT to be used by someone on isolation. Those on quarantine should be allowed phone access and all facilities understand this directive. Please note we were notified of issues with GTL on 04/09/2020 that they were working on.
15. Does DOC consider the time spent in the receiving units as quarantine?
- a. No, as there is potential in some areas for intermingling while in reception. However, someone who comes into reception may be placed into quarantine or isolation as needed.
16. Can DOC change the Covid page to reflect which facilities at MCC have positive cases? Right now they are all bunched together for the whole complex.
- a. The agency is working on this request, but with limited resources there is not a timeframe on this change.
17. Currently there are 2 inmates quarantined in a day room (legacy inmates). 2 more legacy inmates have been quarantined in a separate day room. What happens when more inmates need to be quarantined than space available?

- a. Each facility is adjusting their quarantine and isolation tactics as needed to accommodate the COVID-19 pandemic.
18. Legacy inmates have use of their private yard all day, though now they have been granted use of the larger general population yard as well. This has reduced the use of general populations use to only 40 min/2x a day...definitely not enough to satisfy some outside time, especially with the weather being nice.
- a. The agency is working to allow all incarcerated individuals as much yard time as possible. Each facility is operating a different movement schedule that works within their facility plans. For the most accurate information we would suggest that you inquire at your Local Family Calls.
19. Why are non-essential staff continuing to be allowed in? T4C continues and that staff has offices in the tiers so are in contact with our loved ones!
- a. The Department of Corrections is an essential business and staff who work within the Department of Corrections are to continue their work as long as they can pass the active screening protocols.
20. DNR continues, why? Inmates are together in the bus, breathing the same air, social distancing is impossible...
- a. DNR work crews have been deemed essential workers. Before a work crew is put onto a bus they must pass active screening protocols. All current offsite crews have no contact with any members of the public.
21. The inmates talk, the word is that the only reasons these programs continue is because of the money they bring in from the state.
- a. The department understands the need for programming and as much of a sense of normalcy as possible for the incarcerated population during this hard time. The department is working to allow incarcerated individuals to be able to continue in limited programming activities to help with their mental health and overall health status, and so as not to interfere with their daily living to the extent possible. As these programming activities have become very limited the agency is working to acquire activities that can occur within housing units to keep individuals busy and provide a release from the high stress environments.