

Statewide Family Council COVID-19 Informational Call Notes

**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.**

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Phone-In Information with others, especially via social media.
These are internal DOC communication lines, and are not for public posting.**

Call Details

Facility: STATEWIDE FAMILY COUNCIL

Date and Time: 6/5/2020, 2:00 PM

Attendees

- Suzanne Cook, SFC Family Co-Chair
- Jeneva Cotton, SFC DOC Co-Chair
- Rhonda Roberts, SFC DOC Secretary
- Joanna Carns, OCO Director
- Yoshi Garcia, AHCC Rep
- Leslie Redic, CCCC Rep
- Felix D'Allesandro, MCC Rep
- Paula Bond, MCCCW Rep
- Susan Cooksey, SCCC Rep
- Jason Rice, WCCW Rep
- Wendy Dubinsky, WSP Rep
- Dawn Taylor, HQ
- Paige Perkinson, HQ

Weekly Update

- Discussed Informational Call Notes Template & Webmaster Postings

Pre-Submitted Questions

Question 1

The bill “**SSB 6476**” passed the Senate, passed the House, was signed by Governor Inslee and became law on April 2, 2020 (Chapter 319, Laws of 2020). Section 1 of this bill expands the definition of immediate family AND increases the indigent cap to \$25.00. The bill is effective June 11, 2020. Is DOC prepared to accept these additional funds in an inmate’s account up to the total of \$25 without the funds over \$10 (prior cap) being subject to deductions? In the midst of COVID-19 and lack of visitation, many family members are looking forward to this increase to subsidize their loved ones meals and with special treats.

Answer

Yes. The agency is prepared to implement the programming increase rate from \$10 to \$25 by June 11, 2020.

Question 2

Now that COVID-19 has closed the CI kitchen at Monroe, what will happen with the food preparation? Will the various facilities be allowed to prepare their own food? I believe SCCC is still equipped to do so.

Answer

The MCC kitchens (they have 4) are still operational and not shut down. Over the course of the past couple months, they have had to occasionally close one kitchen intermittently (due to quarantine and isolation) and satellite feed out of the others. At this time, all twelve (12) DOC food service operations do prepare their own food on a daily basis. In regards to the current closure of the Food Factory at CRCC, contingency planning has and will continue to occur assuring the continuity of the larger food supply to all institutions.

Question 3

What families know are inhumane conditions and want to know when DOC will step in and help.

Answer

The department has been stepping in to add precautionary measures to protect the health and safety of the incarcerated population and staff in our facilities beginning as early as February of 2020. For information pertaining to these efforts, please refer to the DOC COVID-19 webpage and review the significant events report which details the timeline of efforts and implementations since the beginning of the DOC COVID-19 response.

Question 4

Where is the support that the OCO is supposed to be offering? The deeper we get, the further away they go and the less they claim they can do.

Answer

Please refer to the OCO information calls taking place on Thursdays at 4:30 pm. DOC is working collaboratively with the OCO and they are actively involved in monitoring the DOC response.

Question 5

The list goes on and on. Please provide some answers for us to the above and how they will be addressed. Thank you for your time!

- a. no food for up to 18 hours at a time
- b. censoring mail
- c. no meds being handed out or at LEAST not on time
- d. staff handing out food with no gloves or leaving it on tables for the men to congregate around while picking it up
- e. all grabbing apples out of a bin
- f. nurses only screening two out of 4 men in a cell
- g. prolonged restricted movement in Medium
- h. finally had 20 minutes out after 90 hours in cell-supposed to be getting a ridiculously short 20 minutes out every other day at least.
- i. not getting the hour out time at all in minimum
- j. the staff brought it in and are STILL not practicing social distancing and are STILL wearing their masks as chin straps
- k. still forcing men to do essential jobs even though the necessary precautions are impossible to follow.

Answer

- a. We cannot answer this as this is not something that is happening consistently and we have no information to respond with. If there is a specific instance of this please send us an email immediately so we can investigate and ensure this does not continue as quickly as possible. This is not something that should be waited on to discuss during these phone calls or something that can be productively discussed during these calls.
- b. DOC is following the same processes for mail as always. Please refer to the policy for mail processes for more information.
- c. Again, this is not something we can speak to as this is not a statewide protocol or practice. If there is specific information please inform us immediately so we can remedy the situation.
- d. Staff who are touching ready to eat food are required to wear gloves. Staff who are helping handout food without touching the ready to eat food are not required to wear gloves per the Department of Health guidelines.
- e. Please provide specific information that can be looked into. This is not information we can productively follow up on.
- f. Nurses are instructed to screen incarcerated individuals who are symptomatic. Those who are symptomatic will be removed from the housing unit and placed on medical isolation status. Those who are not symptomatic will be placed on medical quarantine status and observed per the protocols for instances of showing symptoms.
- g. The Department of corrections is taking precautionary measures to ensure the health and safety of the population. These measures vary per facility and custody level. There are many factors that play into the measures being taken. The top priority is to prevent the spread of the virus.
- h. The facilities are working to improve processes and movement schedules as we work through this pandemic.
- i. Please send in more information and details to follow up on the request. This information is not something that can be followed up on if general information is sent, and these calls are not the platform for this – if there is an instance of this please immediately send the information in so the facilities can look into the matter.
- j. The facilities are continuing to encourage all staff and incarcerated individuals to follow social distancing measures and wearing facial coverings. We understand the concerns and are continuing to follow through on the following of new procedures.
- k. The department of corrections is allowing essential work per the governor’s order to continue and is providing recommended PPE for the specific job per the DOH and Governor’s guidelines.

Question 6

We are current JPay customers and JPay profits from this relationship. What was the response from the Steve Sinclair letter? Did JPay or Securus commit to make any hardware improvements? Or is their commitment only to improve service, their call center response, or updating software, items for which there is little to no cost?

Answer

The department has received no response from JPay or Securus pertaining to the letter of concern from Secretary Steve Sinclair.

Question 7

As visiting may be six months to a year away, can we get a commitment from JPay or Securus to focus specifically on ensuring that Video Visiting functions at 100% for everyone? This will relieve the pressure on DOC and Family providing an alternative to face to face visiting.

Answer

The department is working, as is possible, on improving JPay services.

Question 8 (Updated)

Technology has changed tremendously since JPay first implemented their KIOSKs. Current technology, such as SKYPE or ZOOM, allows up to 100 people to video conference simultaneously. Yet, we can't even get a point to point video visit to work reliably. Can we please request that JPay update their KIOSK hardware/software to support video visiting in a reliable/up-to-date fashion during this Covid-19 crisis?

Answer

This recommendation will be forwarded to the group working on the IITS contract. Unfortunately at this time, JPay has not updated their available technology to WA DOC. OCO J. Carns spoke briefly on call about the process for the vendors vying for the IITS contract, and indicated that JPay has not provided additional services during this time.

Question 9

May we please receive more concrete and reassuring details about what DOC is doing now (not when the governor says it's okay to move to a new phase, but now) to prepare proper "internal processes" (mentioned in that one DOC memo) that will make visiting truly happen as soon as possible. Also, at facilities like WSP that already have such few opportunities to visit compared to other facilities, how will they expand visiting spaces or hours if their protocols entail limiting quantities of visitors? It is not fair to further erode our opportunities to visit.

Answer

The Department of Corrections has a group of staff working out a phased approach to the reopening of visitation. Once there is solidified and finalized information it will be shared with all external stakeholders, including family members.

Question 10

Any news on visitation reopening? Is DOC working on a plan? When will the plan be presented? And will DOC open visitation as soon as governor transitions the state to Phase 4? The response provided in prior meetings is insufficient. Please clarify what information DOC is waiting for.

Answer

The Department of Corrections has a group of staff working out a phased approach to the reopening of visitation. Once there is solidified and finalized information it will be shared with all external stakeholders, including family members.

Question 11

As the state transitions to various phases of the Governor's 4 step reopening plan, what guidance is DOC sending its facilities on easing certain restrictions? Our loved ones are going to lose their minds being locked in a cell without increased rec time. There is no reason why big yard cannot have more than 50 people at a time. Please provide guidance to the facilities to ease these restrictions, people will start developing mental issues that will not serve anyone well. In your previous response, you mentioned this is managed at a facility level and the facility is reporting that they are waiting for guidance from HQ. What is the gap?

Answer

Each facility is advised to implement precautionary measures as is seen necessary by the facility leadership. Facilities are working to encourage social distancing, and allowing no more than 50 individuals in the yard at a time allows staff to be able to encourage and monitor the social distancing measures.

Question 12

In what phase of the Governor's reopening plan will DOC bring back volunteers, programming, etc?

Answer

The department of corrections is using the governor's phasing reopen plan as a source of reference in developing the departments plan for reopening of visitation. There is not a specific correlation to phasing.

Question 13

Why can't the telecommunications project place JPay kiosks into IMU units? Why isn't it enough being locked in a cell for 23 hours a day with no social interaction?

Answer

Those who are in isolation units do have access to phone calls per the new protocols. There is not a plan to add kiosks to the IMU units.

Question 14

In light of the events taking place across the country, what is DOC doing to create humane conditions for the incarcerated, improve officer conduct, etc?

Answer

Please refer to the COVID-19 webpage for the implementations that have been taken by the department.

Question 15

When will LFC and SFC meetings resume? You mentioned SFC will resume in July. What about LFC meetings? Again, the facilities are waiting for direction.

Answer

LFC meetings will resume once regularly scheduled meetings unrelated to COVID-19 are able to resume. At this time, the SFC meeting for July is tentatively scheduled to be held via a virtual platform; however, that decision will be finalized once we are closer to that date. All other regularly scheduled meetings not related to the COVID-19 effort are not being held.

Question 16 (Updated)

Why is there so much movement of the women in the TC program at Mission Creek? How are they going to practice social distancing? The unit is now on quarantine.

Answer

Some women were moved in to the expansion area in an attempt to achieve additional social distancing. The unit that was on quarantine is no longer on quarantine. The facility is hoping to get results back quickly to move forward with next steps.

Question 17

Women headed for work release from Mission Creek must go back to receiving at WCCW for some amount of time. It's my understanding that the men don't do this. Why do they "have" to go through WCCW?

Answer

This process is not COVID-19 related. This is a pre-established process that takes place because of the transports that are available out of the main facilities. This has always been the process, there is no required time frame for holding at any facility. For clarification, men that transfer from eastern Washington to the west side of Washington to partake in work release, do in fact also follow a similar process.

Comments/Closing

- Discussed process for Informational Call Notes getting posted more timely
- Discussed regular LFC meetings not starting again until regular statewide meetings resume
 - Contact local facility representation if you have questions re non-COVID issues
- Discussed transfer of patient to SCCC and discussed reason for transfer
- Discussed transfers through RDC facilities (work release, etc)
- Discussed movement of COVID-positive patients to Regional Care Facilities
- Discussed continuation of gratuity and increased monthly pay cap for incarcerated workers
- Discussed JPay's "dedicated" email address and frustration with JPay for not providing what they committed to for families

Questions for Follow Up:

What is produced at the CRCC Food Factory?

The CRCC Food Factory Produces the following items to support internal and external customers:

- Kettle items such as: Spaghetti sauce, chili, teriyaki chicken, etc. (12 varieties)
- Lunch meat production (9 varieties)
- Burritos (9 varieties)
- Meat Patties: Meatloaf, Salisbury, etc.

What happens if an individual transfers to a Regional Care Facility?

If an individual is transferred to a RCF for temporary care, the goal is that once they have finished their time in the RCF, they will return to their parent facility. Family members who are on LFC calls at the parent facility may reach out to the RCF facility to attend that facility's LFC call during the timeframe the individual is housed in the RCF, and then will be removed from those calls once the individual returns to the parent facility.