

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.**

Date and Time: 08/21/2020, 2:00PM

Attendees

AHCC: Yoshi Garcia
CCCC: Leslie Redic (Last meeting as loved one has transferred to Work/Training Release)
CRCC: Stephanie Biedman
MCC: Felix D'Allensandro
MCCCW: Paula Bond
SCCC: Susan Cooksey
WCC: Portia Hinton
WSP: Wendy Dubinsky
OCO: Joanna Carns
HQ: Jeneva Cotton, DOC Co-Chair; Paige Perkinson

Pre-Submitted Questions

Question 1

Does DOC have plans to implement a COVID-modified visiting model based on the OCO report's recommendation covered recently in the Seattle Times?

Answer

There is currently a workgroup that has created a draft proposal for review by SFC members later in the month. Once reviewed and any required updates are made, the proposal will be presented to the agency executive strategy team for review.

Question 2

Why isn't DOC following CDC guidelines?

Answer

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance on management of COVID-19 in correctional and detention facilities is organized into three sections: Operational Preparedness, Prevention, and Management of COVID-19. Recommendations across these sections should be applied simultaneously based on the progress of the outbreak in a particular facility and the surrounding community. Since March 2020, DOC has continued to take proactive actions utilizing the guidance of the CDC and Washington State Department of Health (DOH). The department has begun posting a cross map correlating CDC recommendations and Corrections' actions that can be found on the DOC COVID-19 webpage.

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Question 3

Why isn't DOC following its own policy around COVID? For example incarcerated being transferred to another facility and not tested for COVID either before or after the transfer and then put in with the rest of the population. Population wonders if the transferred incarcerated people coming in could be COVID positive. Causing angst.

Answer

There is no COVID "policy", per se. If the question is specifically regarding transfers, transfers are being restricted unless necessary for medical evaluation or care medical isolation/quarantine, extenuating security concerns, as appropriate for promotion or demotions, or to prevent overcrowding. Screening occurs prior to any individual being transferred as well as upon arrival at the new facility. There are requirements that are in the medical guidelines that pertain to individuals who are on quarantine status or medical isolation status. The agency protocol surrounding transfers is that each individual will wear the required PPE, at a minimum a face covering, and will undergo an enhanced screening process before the transfer takes place, and again before entering another facility.

All individuals coming into DOC from the community fall under "intake separation" and are tested within 24 hours of intake, and again at seven days. Two negative tests are required prior to release into general population at any facility.

Question 4

What are the plans to alleviate the overcrowding at Shelton? For example Incarcerated transferred into an already full cell and forced to sleep on the floor.

Answer

As noted above, specific transfers are continuing to occur to prevent overcrowding. Due to the intake separation process above, this does create potential for additional floor sleepers at WCC (which has always occurred, to include pre-COVID) temporarily until their period of intake separation and two negative test results are complete. The agency has been able to drastically reduce these numbers, even to maintain a 0 floor sleep count for many weeks during the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue to work towards that goal.

Question 5

How can DOC prevent the spread of the disease if inmates are forced to sleep in other inmates' urine (having to sleep on the floor next to the toilet)?

Answer

This statement is not a factual representation. Floor beds are considered emergency overflow and have always been in existence as required. These floor beds are utilized appropriately per existing protocol and no individuals are forced to sleep in other individual's urine, ever.

Question 6

Can the temporary housing that was put up to house inmates who test positive be used instead to house the overflow?

Answer

The alternative housing areas (tents) at CRCC have already been dismantled and removed as they were installed strictly for COVID-related care at that facility. There are no tents in place at this time at any facility.

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Additional Questions

Question

What happened with the Lewis County Jail inmate that brought COVID into SCCC?

Answer

Clarified that Lewis County had notified of a COVID positive individual from their facility, which led to several violators being placed into isolation and subsequently tested at DOC facilities.

Question

Are individuals tested prior to transfer from one facility to another?

Answer

No, individuals are not tested unless they are symptomatic, or unless they have had close contact with a COVID positive individual. Active screening occurs prior to any transport or transfer, to include active screening questions and a temperature check. This also occurs when the individual arrives at a new facility.

Question

Are there plans to include HEPA filters at all facilities and in all living units?

Answer

Currently, several facility clinics have added HEPA filtration products to their air systems. Facilities are reviewing the need for HEPA filters based on each facility and living areas, as necessary. This will be an ongoing process based on priorities as determined by Clinical Leadership.

Question

How long will facilities be doing staff serial testing, and is the National Guard at all locations?

Answer

The National Guard is currently at CRCC and WSP to assist with staff serial testing; however they have not been at other locations with staff serial testing. Currently, facilities that have implemented staff serial testing are CRCC, MCC, WCCW, and WSP, with plans to start next at AHCC. Facilities are reviewed for priority in collaboration with Prisons/Health Services Unified Command and Clinical Leadership.

Comments/Closing

- Safe Start Visitation SFC Review: 08/27/2020
- Next SFC Informational Call: 09/04/2020
- Wendy Dubinsky provided information re Pennsylvania DOC video visitation (Deb Saud)