

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:

Date and Time: 1/22/2021, 2:00 PM

Attendees

- AHCC – Rachel Bisbee
- CBCC – Janet Floyd
- CCCC
- CRCC - Gwen McIlveen
- LCC
- OCC
- MCC
- MCCCW
- SCCC – Susan Cooksey
- WCC
- WCCW
- WSP
- DOC - Jeremy Barclay
- OCO - Joanna Carns
- DOC - Paige Perkinson
- Loren Taylor Co-Chair

Weekly Update

- Topic

Pre-Submitted Questions

Question 1

To date, what is the longest duration of time DOC has kept a single living unit on COVID quarantine lockdown? (For example, prisoners on B side of WSP William Unit have been on quarantine lockdown for two months, and I'm curious how this compares to statewide practices.) How is DOC mitigating the adverse mental and physical health effects these solitary-confinement-like conditions are imposing on people, many of whom are already post-positive but are still being required to stay on quarantine because of a tiny quantity of people on their unit who have not yet tested positive? Is there no better way DOC can coordinate this?

Answer

This first question is not able to be answered by us prior to this meeting. These details are being recorded at a local level and a clinical level /Prisons level but have not been reviewed for accuracy and reporting structures at this time. Upon DOC's review of the COVID-19 pandemic response, post response, this information will be evaluated. At this time, we know that some facilities in outbreak status have had units on quarantine status for extended periods of time to ensure the health and safety of all individuals residing in the unit.

The Department takes all concerns about mental health very seriously. Mental Health staff are conducting rounds with all individuals who are placed on quarantine or medical isolation status. Facilities provide in-cell

activity packets, puzzles, additional time out with cohorts if possible, and day room activity whenever it is safe to do so.

Facilities have provided televisions at no charge, and have also provided additional food/beverages, such as granola bars and Gatorade to help mitigate some of the undoubted hardships being given a limited movement schedule may bring.

Question 2

This one has multiple parts: **Are nurses tracking and reporting systemic medical concerns statewide pertaining to unintended medical and mental health consequences of COVID quarantine and isolation protocols?** (Ex. Some prisoners report high heart rate measures due to anxiety when nurses are doing daily quarantine vitals checks, and some prisoners who end up on quarantine for two plus months report having blisters on their feet when they start to get more time walking outside of their cell when quarantine ends.) **Is DOC Unified Command tracking these side consequences of quarantine protocols, and if so, what is DOC doing to address, alleviate, and make amends for them?** These quarantine and isolation protocols have really taken a toll on prisoners and their families, and merely lifting them at a time when it is possible does not feel sufficient to make amends for the damage done. What would help make amends would be knowing that DOC is trying to find a way NOT to inflict these side consequences on prisoners in the future who end up going through quarantine and isolation protocols as outbreaks keep popping up around the state. **In light of this, how is DOC modifying its quarantine and isolation protocols right now to reduce unintended side consequences and harms?**

Answer

For updates to the quarantine and medical isolation practices being done at each facility, please review the DOC COVID-19 webpage where protocol updates are posted. For facility specific information, please inquire at your local facilities to hear the updates they have implemented at their respective facilities. Facilities are working each day to improve cohort schedules and provide additional access to communication with loved ones and activities that can be maintained in their cell. Clinical is working each day and assessing all individuals who are on quarantine and medical isolation status to record their symptoms and provide assistance for any medical hardships they may be experiencing. The department will continue to provide assistance to all individuals incarcerated in the Washington Correctional Facilities, and we appreciate families and loved ones for helping us to ensure individuals circumstances are reported and addressed.

Question 3

Does DOC have plans to survey prisoners who have experienced quarantine and isolation protocols to get feedback on what DOC could do better as it continues to revise its COVID response protocols based on what it has learned?

Answer

The Department has prioritized the advice of healthcare professionals and protocols in place to include the [Screening, Testing, Infection Control Guidelines](#) are science based protocols. The Department also bases these protocols on guidance from health officials including the Centers for Disease Control's [Interim Guidance on Management of Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID\)19 in Correctional and Detention Facilities](#). These science based protocols are necessary to ensure the department can continue providing the best quality healthcare to those in its custody.

The Department does not have a plan currently to survey incarcerated individuals regarding the quarantine and medical isolation protocols. Incarcerated individuals have methods to share their concerns and feedback with facility staff, to include health services.

Question 4

DOC HQ and local facility staff members have been using the phrase "new normal" to describe a lot of restricted modes of operation that are being imposed on prisoners (and at some point in the future, on visitors). When DOC says "new normal", can it reassure us that it does only mean "Pandemic new normal" and not "FOREVER AND EVER new normal"? Families and prisoners have real fears about permanent damage being done to our quality of life and access to the few aspects of life and family normalcy we have in the wake of the COVID pandemic.

Answer

The Department cannot predict how the operations will be adjusted post COVID-19. The department is working to prepare the facility to be able to return to operations as close to pre-COVID-19 operations as possible. However, there may be additional regulations and precautionary measures that the agency will be required to operate within.

Comments/Closing

Loretta – more specific and non-evasive answers

Susan Cooksey – what kind of quality assurance is being done at facilities to ensure compliance of the COVID-19 protocols.

- Since late summer there have been QA teams going out with predetermined forms for measuring the efficacy of the covid-19 protocols in the facilities. These teams are not facility staff, they are staff from outside the facility staff, but are DOC staff. Post QA, the teams debrief with the superintendent to ensure that they have the information to implement additional measures and follow up as needed.

Janet Floyd – CBCC has such a small impact from COVID-19, what could they be doing right? No real question, but it seems there is something going right there.

- Appreciate the efforts CBCC and their staff have been putting forward to ensure the spread of COVID-19 is minimal in their facility.

Rachel Bisbee – UV lights? Are those tangible? Are they helpful? Can DOC use them?

- Not familiar with these lights. What we do know, is that mask wearing, social distancing, etc. What we do notice, is what seems to be effective in the community and CDC recognizes as beneficial, makes its way into the facilities. These lights are not something we are familiar with but we will continue to follow the research.

Paula Bond – what are DOC’s protocols for testing prior to release and quarantine of individuals before release.

- The department does test if individuals are on quarantine status and if they present any symptoms of COVID-19 prior to departure.

Loren Taylor – No questions.

Gwen CRCC – When will there be a sense of normalcy – this is just a black tunnel with no end.

- This is where we are at today, and we can only stretch protocols minimally before we risk continued exposure. Continuing protocols and ensuring these measures are taken is essential and must be continued.

Rachel – second question about creating a secondary unit.