

State of Wisconsin

Department of Corrections

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COVID-19 (Coronavirus): Announcements

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First Confirmed Case of COVID-19 Amongst a Person in our Care

Friday, April 2, 2020

On April 2, 2020, the Department of Corrections became aware that a person in our care at Columbia Correctional Institution has a confirmed case of COVID-19. The individual is believed to have been exposed to COVID-19 while on a trip outside of the facility. The individual has not had any direct contact with any other person in our care since that time, and employees that had direct contact with the individual were immediately notified. The facility has implemented intensive sanitizing and disinfectant measures with an emphasis on routinely cleaning critical areas and high touch surfaces and transportation vehicles. The individual is under the direct medical care of healthcare staff at the facility.

DHS Updates Priority Testing Criteria

Friday, March 27, 2020

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) has modified the criteria for which individuals will be considered highest priority to ensure that priority specimens are processed in a timely manner. In order to conserve supplies for testing, DHS is prioritizing two tiers of cases for testing:

Tier One

- Individuals who are critically ill and receiving ICU level care with unexplained viral pneumonia or respiratory failure -OR-
- Individuals who are residents of long-term care facilities or other high consequence congregate settings (e.g. prisons or jails), with unexplained fever OR signs/symptoms of acute respiratory illness -OR-
- Post-mortem testing for people who died of unknown causes, if COVID-19 testing would influence infection control interventions or inform a public health response.

Tier Two

- Hospitalized (non-ICU) individuals with unexplained fever and signs and symptoms of acute respiratory illness -OR-
- Health care workers and first responders with unexplained fever AND signs/symptoms of acute respiratory illness, regardless of hospitalization -OR-
- Essential staff in high consequence congregate settings (e.g. correctional officers) with unexplained fever AND signs/symptoms of acute respiratory illness, regardless of hospitalization.

Test requests that do not meet these criteria will not be tested at the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene or the Milwaukee Health Department Laboratory and will be sent to other labs in the state and country for testing, resulting in longer wait times. Find more information [here](#).

Fourth Confirmed Case of COVID-19 Reported by Corrections Employee

Thursday, March 26, 2020

The Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) has received confirmation that a fourth employee has tested positive for COVID-19 (Coronavirus). The fourth positive case was confirmed on March 26, 2020 and is an employee at the Milwaukee Secure Detention Facility within the Division of Adult Institutions. Upon notice of the confirmed case, the employee was directed to quarantine per CDC guidelines. Effective immediately, the institution has suspended administrative rules. The purpose of this suspension is strictly precautionary as maintaining the health, safety and well-being of staff and persons in our care remains our top priority.

Third Confirmed Case of COVID-19 Reported by Corrections Employee

Wednesday, March 25, 2020

The Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) has received confirmation that a third employee has tested positive for COVID-19 (Coronavirus). The third positive case was confirmed on March 24, 2020 and is an employee in the Division of Community Corrections, Region 3. Upon notice of the confirmed case, the employee was directed to quarantine per CDC guidelines. All applicable staff were notified and a deep-cleaning of the site was completed. DOC will direct any employees that report symptoms to quarantine for 14 days.

DOC is taking the situation very seriously, and is working closely with DHS on best practices on how to handle each situation as they occur. We will continue to monitor the situation and act in accordance with the guidelines established by our state and federal partners. The health and safety of our staff and those in our care continue to be our top priority during this crisis.

second Confirmed Case of COVID-19 Reported by Corrections Employee

Tuesday, March 22, 2020

The Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) has received confirmation that a third employee has tested positive for COVID-19 (Coronavirus). The first positive case was confirmed on March 18, 2020 and is an employee at Waupun Correctional Institution (WCI). The second positive case was confirmed on March 21, 2020 and is an employee at Columbia Correctional Institution (CCI). Both institutions are maximum security facilities and upon notice of the confirmed positive test, each institution suspended administrative rules to limit movement for the protection of our staff and the adults in our care. Both employees were directed to quarantine per CDC guidelines.

In the last several weeks DOC has taken several steps to minimize the risk to staff and persons under our care from exposure to COVID-19 (Coronavirus). Each division maintains detailed pandemic plans that outline protocols and isolation procedures when and if an individual is exposed or infected. Upon confirmation of a positive case, all potentially exposed staff are notified, and all adults in custody directly exposed are quarantined. Any staff members that report symptoms will be directed to quarantine for 14 days.

suspension of Admissions to State Prisons & Juvenile Facilities

Saturday, March 21, 2020

Effective March 23, 2020, all admissions to the state prisons and juvenile facilities operated by the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) are suspended, with exceptions for some essential transfers. This decision was made out of an abundance of caution as part of the statewide efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. We take the responsibility to protect staff and persons in our care seriously and continue to work with the Governor and other state and federal agencies on best practices to protect our staff and persons in our care. DOC will continue to review the necessity of this order and will work with our county partners to discuss any potential modifications that may be necessary.

Read [Governor Evers' Order to the Department of Corrections](#).

update to DAI Inmate Canteen Policy

Thursday, March 19, 2020

Effective immediately, the Division of Adult Institutions (DAI) made two notable changes to the Inmate Canteen Policy as outlined below:

- The first change increased the weekly and bi-weekly spending limits for adults in our care and custody. Weekly spending limits increased from \$42.00 to \$50.00 and bi-weekly spending limits increased from \$84.00 to \$100.00. The change in spending limits does not change the spending limits placed at specific facilities or housing units.
- The second policy change addresses the permitted refunds available to adults in our care and custody. Section C, 1 and 2 of the policy have been updated. The policy now states “Inmates shall only be issued a refund for an item if a wrong item, damaged item, or no item is sent. If “no” item is sent it is noted on the receipt by staff at the time of delivery. No other refunds will be issued unless the inmate is no longer housed at the receiving facility.”

For any issues or concerns with canteen, please follow Section II, C of the [Inmate Canteen Policy](#).

suspension of Transfers from Contracted County Jail Beds

Thursday, March 19, 2020

Effective immediately, all transfers from state contracted county jail beds have been suspended until further notice for everyone's safety. This applies to all individuals sentenced to the Wisconsin Department of Corrections, Division of Adult Institutions (DAI) but are currently housed in a contracted county jail bed. Transfers are suspended until such time as the risk of contamination is reduced.

Traditionally, the DAI places state inmates from Dodge Correctional Institution (DCI) into a county jail placement for up to 120 days and then transports those inmates back to DAI. In order to limit the potential for exposure and spread of COVID-19, DAI will not be scheduling transfers into or out of the county jail for the duration of this public health emergency.

phone Calls during Temporary Suspension of Visits

Thursday, March 19, 2020

On March 13, 2020, the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) temporarily suspended visits at all DOC institutions to minimize the risk of exposing staff, persons in our care, and the public to COVID-19. We understand the significant impacts this suspension has on persons in our care and their loved ones. As a result, we have partnered with CenturyLink to expand methods of communication to use during this time.

Effective immediately, in accordance with institution policies and procedures, **the DOC is providing two (2) free fifteen-minute phone calls per week until visits resume.** To take advantage of the free phone calls, please see the below information:

- The two free phone calls will be available each week, Sunday through Saturday.
- International phone calls are not included in the free phone calls available.
- To use the free calls, select 3 on the keypad. Once a call is connected, it will count as one of the free calls available to the persons in our care, regardless of the length of the call.
- All other institution telephone policies and procedures still apply.

Note: Youth in our care have been granted unlimited free phone calls during this health emergency.

Division of Community Corrections (DCC) Announcement

Tuesday, March 17, 2020

In an effort to reduce the risk of exposure during the COVID-19 emergency, the Division of Community Corrections (DCC) is implementing several strategies to keep our staff and clients safe. We will continue to maintain community safety through active monitoring and interventions by limiting interpersonal interactions. Some staff will begin working remotely and we are allowing clients to report to their agents by video conference. DCC funded program groups have also been postponed. If individuals or their families have questions they should [contact their agent or call the main office line](#).

suspension of Work Release

Monday, March 16, 2020

The Wisconsin Department of Corrections is suspending work release at state correctional facilities, effective immediately. Please contact individual work release sites for additional details related to this suspension.

suspension of Medical Co-Pays

Friday, March 13, 2020

The co-pay is temporarily suspended in the Division of Adult Institutions to allow anyone who is incarcerated and exhibiting symptoms related to COVID-19 to seek medical attention right away.

suspension of All Visits at DOC Institutions

Friday, March 13, 2020

All visits, including volunteer visits, are temporarily suspended at all Department of Corrections Institutions. We take our responsibility to protect staff and persons in our care very seriously, and out of an abundance of caution are taking actions to minimize the risk of bringing COVID-19 (Coronavirus) into facilities. Several other State correctional agencies in the Midwest have made this difficult choice as well. DOC understands that this will greatly impact persons under our care and their families, and will be reviewing this decision on a daily basis. We will be actively looking into expanding the methods of communication we use during the time visits are suspended. At this time all professional visits will continue, but we will make accommodations for phone calls and video conferences/visits, or non-contact visits whenever possible.

Contact Information

- *3099 East Washington Ave.*
Madison, WI 53704
- [\(608\) 240-5000](tel:(608)240-5000)

Public Information Links

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