

COVID-19 Update 10.26.2020

Hi All-

Before I dig into the COVID update, I wanted to share a bit of good news. Last Thursday, we held an open house for the Twin Falls CRC and the place looks great! Kudos to Tom Fenley, Pam McCarroll, and her team for working so hard to ready the center for the reopening. If you've been around long enough, you might remember the TFCRC of years past, but I assure you, it looks like an entirely new place and it is emblematic of the change we are trying to facilitate within our department and in the lives of those in custody. If you're in the Twin Falls area, stop by and check it out.

Let's dig in on the COVID-19 front...

If you've been watching the news lately, you know that the number of COVID-19 cases nationally, and here in Idaho, continues to grow. Today, **Governor Little rolled the State back to Stage 3** of the [Rebound Idaho plan](#). This means that we will need to reevaluate our plans to resume work travel and trainings. If you have an immediate question about this, please contact your division leadership.

Close Contact

On October 22nd, the CDC issued a slightly modified definition of what "close contact" means as it relates to COVID-19. Instead of defining close contact as contact that occurs within 6' and lasts for 15 minutes, the definition now says that it's *a total of 15 minutes over the course of a day*. With guidance continuing to evolve as we learn more about the coronavirus and how it is spread, is important to remain focused on the three main ways you can keep yourself and others safe: **1) wear a mask; 2) keep 6' of distance between you and others whenever possible; and 3) wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water.** I also want to remind everyone to clean conference tables and common spaces after use.

Staff Testing

Among our staff, we've conducted 2,548 tests and have a total of 184 IDOC staff who have been positive for COVID-19 at some point in the pandemic. Last week, we tested staff at SBWCC, SICI, and TVCRC and we only had two asymptomatic positives, which was great news! This week, our testing teams head east and will be testing all staff and residents at PWCC on 10/27. The teams will be back in the Treasure Valley for outgoing/incoming RDU testing on 10/29.

Resident Testing

Among the incarcerated population, we've conducted 11,682 tests and have 9,488 negative, 127 pending, 33 symptomatic positive, 539 asymptomatic positive, and 3 deaths. Testing last week was focused on the ISCI Annex and our incoming/outgoing RDU residents. Tomorrow the focus will be on PWCC.

BinaxNOW™ Testing

In partnership with the Division of Public Health, IDOC is going to be able to provide rapid antigen testing for active COVID-19 infections. We are VERY excited about this development because the BinaxNOW point in care test does not require an instrument. That means within the next couple of weeks, all of our housing facilities will have the capability to test symptomatic individuals with a nasal swab and Ag Card system!

IDNOW™ Testing

Our supply of IDNOW™ test kits is getting very low and new supplies are not easily obtained. As such, we are reserving the tests for those individuals within our closed populations. Until we have the BinaxNOW™ tests available, symptomatic staff in the Boise area can set up an appointment with First Responders on Emerald Street. They will send samples into the Idaho Bureau of Laboratories (IBL) for priority processing. Staff outside the Boise area can be tested through a local healthcare provider, but will need to request the sample be sent to IBL for priority processing. The healthcare provider may have a contract with another lab and not be willing to send the sample to IBL. This will likely result in a longer processing time. We will let you all know when the BinaxNOW™ is available.

Please take care of yourself and each other.

Best,
Bree

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