

COVID-19 Update - April 06, 2020

Hi all-

Short update today, and that's a good thing.

Statewide Update: Idaho is now reporting 1,170 confirmed cases and a total of 13 deaths from COVID-19 related complications. In our system, we've submitted 19 samples for testing and all 19 have returned NEGATIVE.

Masks: The CDC recently revised their guidance related to masks. Previously, the CDC was not recommending for people to wear cloth face coverings. There now appears to be some evidence cloth face coverings can be effective at slowing the spread of COVID-19. In light of this new evidence, CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies) especially in areas of significant community-based transmission. They also stress the additional safety measure is voluntary.

Later this week, production of cloth face coverings will begin in our institutions. Our first priority will be providing them to staff and the people in our custody. We'll have some additional guidance out by mid-week, but I wanted to let you know this has been on our radar and we'll have more information for you soon.

Staff Medical Screening: Since we implemented medical screening, 116 staff members have been sent home or self-reported symptoms. 36 have since been cleared to return to work. We're working with epidemiologists at the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare to refine our staff medical screening process. We're working to update our process to be consistent with the most updated CDC recommendations. But I want to take this opportunity to remind you how important it is to be vigilant about your own health, especially at a time when community spread is prevalent. The odds are, COVID-19 isn't going to show up in our system on a transport bus – it's going to walk through our front sally port if we aren't careful. All of us have a responsibility to self-monitor for symptoms. You can find additional information from the CDC [here](#). If you're not feeling well, don't risk it!

Thank you all again for everything you're doing. Please take care of yourself and keep looking out for each other!

Thanks-
Josh