

COVID-19 Update - May 05, 2020

Hi all-

Throughout the week, we'll be using our social media platforms to spotlight the work that often isn't highlighted or celebrated. Attached is a preview of a series of posts we're going to launch tomorrow entitled, "While you were sleeping. . ." Our facilities never close, and tomorrow we're going to showcase the work that happens because of first-shifters who carry out their duties while most people are sleeping. If you haven't already, follow IDOC on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Keep an eye out for posts throughout the week highlighting staff and the important work that goes on in our agency.

Cloth Face Coverings: We're working with the infectious disease control experts at the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) to develop our policy for the use of cloth face coverings going forward. I'm just going to say it: I struggle with them. I'm uncomfortable in them, and there's a part of me that's usually pretty cavalier about these sort of things that just feels silly wearing a mask. And I'm going to tell you the same thing I tell myself – get over it! Wear the dang mask when you can't avoid close contact with other people. The science is pretty clear that while cloth face coverings don't afford you the same protection as a N95 respirator, they can be an effective precautionary measure that slows the spread of COVID-19. By now, everyone who works or lives in our system should be in the possession of cloth face coverings. While we work with DHW to refine our policy on their use, I can't stress enough how important it is to wear them when your work will put you in close proximity to others. Wear it for them and wear it for you!

Each day, I get updates from my peers across the country who are battling COVID-19 in their systems. We've been fortunate, and we're going to continue pushing proactive measures – like cloth face coverings – that can help keep us safe.

Teachers, you're on deck. Don't think for a second we're going to let Teacher Appreciation Week go by without showing you some love as well! And seriously, even though you are instructing adults in our custody, I suspect you're going to inherit a lot of love this year from a lot of parents who are telecommuting right now. . .

This week is a time for all of us to take stock of the work we do. I'm honored and proud to be in your company. I hope you feel the same level of pride in your important role.

Thanks-
Josh