

COVID-19 Update - May 12, 2020

Hi all-

Another slow news day on the COVID front, but it's been anything but slow. As we progress through this public health crisis, we're able to get back after many of the things that were on our to-do list on March 12th, and that feels good.

Management Services Transition: With Pat Donaldson heading to greener pastures at the Division of Public Works, Christine Starr will be acting Management Services Chief until Pat's successor is found. The job announcement seeking applications should be posted by the end of this week. Until a replacement is named, all inquiries usually routed through Pat should go to Christine.

COVID Updates: The incident command team continues to meet daily, and we're continuing to stay atop of any changes in guidance or best practices that can be implemented to protect our staff and the people in our custody or under our supervision. Fortunately, we're finding the landscape that was once so fluid is now starting to stabilize. As a result, I'm going to scale back the daily update to 3 times per week or as-needed in the event urgent information needs communicated. So plan on updates Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

I can't stress this enough: we might be scaling back updates, but not our efforts to keep COVID-19 from entering our system. I'm not a big fan of waiting for something to happen, so your continued vigilance is needed now more than ever. The situation could change in an instant, and one positive case in our correctional facilities could have significant consequences. Nothing binds anxiety like action, and the actions all of you can take are the ones we know mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Stay home when possible. Practice good social distancing and wear a cloth face covering when you're unable to avoid close proximity to others. Wash your hands often and practice good hygiene.

I say it a lot because it's true – I'm really proud of how all of you have responded to this unprecedented crisis. Sheltering in place isn't a luxury afforded many of our staff, and during a time of unusual uncertainty, you kept showing up to do your job or embraced new ways to do the work when you couldn't be there in person. Now we have to keep it up because even though we're progressing in reopening the economy, the threat posed by COVID-19 to the people in our custody remains unchanged. I know we're up for it.

Thanks again for all of your hard work.

Thanks-
Josh