

COVID-19 Update - July 28, 2020

Hi all-

Confession time: the day got away from me today. The Board Meeting update I promised you is going to have to wait until tomorrow. But there are a couple of things I wanted to get out to you tonight.

Staff Testing Results: We only had one staff member test positive for COVID-19 today. The staff member works at the East Boise CRC. We also wrapped up mass testing of ISCI staff today. IMSI and SBWCC staff are up on Thursday.

Incarcerated Population Testing: We appreciate the partnership we've established with Saltzer Health to facilitate our mass testing events for staff. We're excited to announce we've expanded that partnership to include mass testing of the incarcerated population. Later this week, we'll be releasing more specific details about the order testing will occur, but we'll be testing 1,500 people per week between staff and our incarcerated population.

We have a discrepancy with our testing tracking data that we're reporting. The spreadsheet this evening wasn't updated with the pending SAWC testing that occurred yesterday. We'll update the website tomorrow when the numbers are reconciled.

Surgical Masks: We continue to work with the epidemiologists and infectious disease control experts with the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare to review updated CDC guidance and update our protocols. A recent update includes the wearing of surgical (medical) masks by staff and incarcerated individuals in facilities. Enough surgical masks have been distributed to every facility to provide 4 masks to each staff member and incarcerated individual. Earlier this evening, Chief Page issued a memo for all staff to now wear the surgical masks.

The state epidemiologists recommended we make this change to offer additional protections to minimize the risk of transmission. The other thing to note is that the masks can be safely reused. When doffed, they can be folded in half with the inside portions touching. They recommend storing them for a day between uses. All of us recognize that the changing guidance can be frustrating. Please know we wouldn't be advocating a change in direction if we weren't convinced it was in the best interests of everyone's health and safety.

On a personal note, you have to be more careful with surgical masks than you're used to with cloth face coverings. I broke a couple in one day because I was in a hurry. That, or my beard is particularly powerful. Either way, we have A LOT more of the surgical masks in stock, and we're making sure facilities can get their hands on plenty extra for those of you as careless as I am.

That's it for tonight. Please take care of yourself and keep looking out for each other!

Thanks-
Josh