

COVID-19 Update - July 31, 2020

Hi all-

Happy Friday! It's been a roller coaster of a week, but the work continues. It's four days behind, but here's a recap of the Board meeting.

Board Meeting: On Monday, the Board convened for an afternoon session. The Board finalized language to change IDAPA Rule to now allow for organ and tissue donation by incarcerated individuals. After that, the meeting looked forward.

The Board weighed in on a draft strategic plan to guide our work for the coming years. Since November of 2019, we've been working with statewide leaders and sharing concepts with groups of staff to develop a strategic plan to not only guide our work, but to hold us accountable to it. In the Board meeting, we shared out 4 strategic goals along with performance measures to help drive and gauge our progress towards achieving those goals. The Board members asked a lot of great questions and provided helpful feedback geared towards making sure our goals were aspirational and measurable. We're incorporating that feedback now with the goal of having the strategic plan and performance measures ready for launch by the end of August.

We also shared a budget outlook with the Board for IDOC. The only thing certain about the economic outlook right now is that it is full of uncertainty. As a result, all agencies were instructed to reduce their budgets by 5% for the current fiscal year. For us, that equated to a \$13.9 million reduction for the current year. That's the bad news. The good news is that we're going to be just fine. We'll have to adjust course on some things, as is appropriate to do, but the vast majority of that reduction will be absorbed by anticipated growth that didn't materialize. Our incarcerated population is at 8,631 today. On March 1, we were at 9,560. Growth has a significant impact on the contracted portions of our budget like Medical Services, County and Out of State Placement since there are additional costs associated with each one of those areas. Not only has the anticipated growth not materialized, we also have seen an almost 10% reduction in our population. That means \$11 million of the holdback is being absorbed in those contract budgets.

And while I know few of you may be interested in the minutia of our budget, I suspect all of you are interested in some of the other areas of our budget like Change in Employee Compensation (CEC) – also known as pay raises. Here's where we are on raises in the current year: we still don't know. We were appropriated to give a 2% increase this year, but those plans were put on hold. I wish I had a definitive answer on if or when we could implement CEC, but I don't think that decision will be made at a statewide level until revenues for the current fiscal year are clearer.

In preparation of our budget submission for FY 2022, we've been instructed to keep our request within the confines of our current year appropriation. Given the population trends, we're confident we can address some pressing needs and come in at or below our current funding levels.

What's happening with our population is encouraging, and we're committed to focusing resources in areas that can further reduce demand for prison beds by helping people be successful. But we still have people being housed out of state and we still have too many people sitting in county jails. The reduction in our population doesn't mean we don't still have to look at additional capacity. It means we're not as far behind as we were in March. We presented the Board with a 10-year forecast showing our bed

needs by gender and custody level. It shows what we already know: absent additional capacity, we're in trouble. We solicited insight from the Board on their priorities and what they want to see in capacity proposals to meet current and future needs. Armed with that information, we'll be developing capacity proposals over the next month for the Board's consideration.

Back to COVID: I have a movie night planned with the kiddos (thankfully, we're past Trolls World Tour), so I'm going to send this update before I get updated testing numbers for the day. After 6:00, you can check the updated testing and results numbers [here](#).

Emergency Housing: In our first funding request before the Coronavirus Funding Advisory Committee, we sought and received funding in the event we would need to secure emergency housing for incarcerated individuals during an outbreak. We're there. For several weeks, we've been working with the Idaho Military Division to utilize one of their facilities to house incarcerated individuals for a short period of time. This emergency housing provides us with the operational flexibility to create specific purpose units and safe zones in our existing facilities. Generally, we don't discuss movements like this in advance in order to preserve operational security. The word is out, and I wanted to share with you what I could. We'll share more information on the particulars next week when we are able.

Not that recent weeks have been uneventful, but next week promises to be hopping with a lot of testing, movement, etc. I hope everyone has a safe, relaxing, and enjoyable weekend! Please take care of yourself.

Thanks-
Josh