

COVID-19 Update 09.25.2020

Hello everyone,

I wanted to provide an update on recent events, both COVID and otherwise.

Out-of-state update – This week, we transported approximately 170 men back to Idaho from the Eagle Pass, TX facility. These men were returned to Idaho – rather than moved to AZ – primarily due to impending parole hearings or full term release dates. We have one person remaining in Eagle Pass presently, who was not medically-cleared to travel. We also have 438 men currently housed in a facility in AZ.

COVID-19 testing – Last week, our testing teams went north and conducted mass testing of all staff and residents at both NICI and ICIO. We had 88 residents test positive at NICI and 1 at ICIO, but the latter was moved from NICI because he was symptomatic.

We've had a few new COVID-19 cases develop at the SAWC and we're hearing from the epidemiologist that the Idaho Falls has an increasing illness rate, so next week our testing teams will retest everyone at SAWC and IFCRC. Testing will include staff and residents and is planned for Tuesday, 9/29.

Going forward, each Thursday morning we test all of the individuals getting ready to leave the RDU for placement into other facilities. Thursday afternoon we test all of the individuals who have just arrived at the RDU for processing.

Resident testing results – To date, we have conducted 9,157 of tests on the resident population and have 7,453 negative, 86 pending, 42 positive with symptoms, 306 asymptomatic positive, 1,268 inactive, and 2 deaths.

Numbers for Eagle Pass, TX and Saguaro in AZ remain unchanged and can be found [here](#).

Staff testing results – As of yesterday, we had 130 IDOC staff who've tested positive for COVID-19 during this pandemic. Three cases were added early this week, but no new cases have been reported on Wednesday or Thursday. Results for today are not yet in.

Visiting/returning residents to work – As Director Tewalt mentioned last week, we are working in concert with the state epidemiologists to plan a gradual return to in-person visiting and to work opportunities for residents. During our planning meetings on visiting, we've discovered that there are *a ton of visitors whose visitation approval may need to be renewed*. We'll be putting the message out on social media and our website, but please encourage potential visitors to ensure their credentials are up to date.

Plans to return residents to on- and off-compound work are being fine-tuned. Our aim is to return as many residents to work opportunities as soon as we are able to do safely. This pandemic has taught us we need to be flexible and to adapt to changing circumstances. That will remain true when it comes to reopening work and visiting. We will be basing our plans off of COVID-19 rates in the state and local communities, so the plans are subject to change.

Please stay healthy.

Best,
Bree

Bree E. Derrick
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