

COVID-19 Update - April 2, 2020

Hi all-

Today, Idaho reported 222 new confirmed cases of COVID-19, bringing the total to 891. Included in that total was another IDOC staff member. We received word today that a staff member at IMSI tested positive. The staff member has recovered well and has been symptom-free for several days. Fortunately, it appears the individual self-quarantined early.

While I expect it to happen with greater frequency, it doesn't get any easier. It will be standard procedure for the impacted worksite to receive an email with more specific information. On the plus side, D4 was notified today by the Public Health District that the positive staff member was not infectious when last at work and they do not believe any exposure occurred.

Change in leave donation: We received word yesterday that the state is suspending some rules governing donating leave time to your co-workers. We now are able to donate sick leave instead of vacation to others who have exhausted their available leave while out for an extended period of time. This is great news, and HR will be providing additional guidance in the next couple days.

Governor's Coronavirus Taskforce: Earlier today, I provided an update to the Governor's Coronavirus Taskforce on IDOC's effort to protect our staff and the people in our custody from COVID-19. In preparing for the meeting, we had the chance to go line by line through the objectives that have been set and accomplished since ICS was initiated. It was a great opportunity to reflect on how much you have accomplished in such a short amount of time. The Governor remarked that we don't have Corrections without the staff, and he's spot on. It was an honor to be able to present your hard work to the group. We're at a critical point. We're still in phase 2, but the increased spread of COVID-19 warrants we constantly revisit and review our operations. We'll be working with an Epidemiologist and infectious disease specialist to ensure our system is well-positioned.

Thank you, Program staff! COVID-19 has changed so many aspects of how we do business, but it hasn't changed what has to be done. That's the thing about having a job deemed essential. It's not just essential when times are good or when it's convenient. Our program managers and case managers have had their worlds turned upside down lately, and I couldn't be prouder of the way they have responded. Telephonic and video hearings mean that instead of putting someone on transport for their hearing and going on about their day, now they have to schedule and facilitate all those hearings. But that doesn't mean programming can stop. Nope. Still an important requirement for releases. Oh, and those people we're trying to release to parole? Yep, they need to have plans in place. Then add to that the number of people in our custody who have lost their jobs or had programming disrupted and it equals even more demands for their time. And they are absolutely rocking it and making it happen! Thank you program managers, case managers, reentry specialists, and everyone else pitching in!

COVID-19 Tracker Updated: The COVID-19 tracker on the website has been updated to include testing information for Eagle Pass. You can check it out [here](#).

That's it for tonight, folks. Please know how much you're appreciated!

Thanks-

Josh