

## Vaccine Update

By Josh Tewalt, Director, Idaho Department of Correction

Hi All-

We've got a few pieces of good news to share with you today, so I'll cut right to it. First, we're seeing fewer staff are testing positive COVID-19 in recent weeks than had been previously. Looking back a few months, we had about 97 staff test positive in December, about 40 in January, and only 6 so far in February. This is encouraging and I hope it continues.

One of the reasons for decreasing positive tests are increasing numbers of staff getting vaccinated. To date, we've had 155 staff get vaccinated at our first on-site clinic and we're aware of about 29 others who've completed their two vaccines and let us know. While you're not required to notify us if you obtain the vaccine outside of IDOC, we are asking that if you're comfortable doing so, send a copy of completed vaccine card (after your second shot) to Mike Evans in HR [@Evans, Michael](#). This will help us when we need to determine if someone who has been exposed to COVID-19 will need to quarantine. The CDC has recently issued guidance that our HR team has now adopted, which will allow people who've been fully vaccinated to avoid quarantines even after an exposure.

We will be holding a second staff vaccine clinic on March 2<sup>nd</sup> on the south Boise complex. This clinic will be open to first-timers (those who haven't had a shot yet) and those who received their first shot at the initial IDOC clinic. **If you live outside the Treasure Valley, we are encouraging you to contact your local health district for vaccination locations in your area and coordinate your own vaccination**, since we don't expect that IDOC will be able to facilitate clinics to smaller sites. You are eligible now to receive them as a correctional employee. Vaccines are free to any staff member who wants them.

If you're interested in learning more about [vaccine safety](#) and [vaccine development](#), you can click on the links to short videos from the US Department of Health and Human Services.

We are also expecting that vaccines for vulnerable residents and those ages 65 and over should be coming our way in the next week or so. Vaccines were delayed this week due to the snow storm but we do think things will be back on track soon.

More coming your way soon. In the meantime, stay safe and have a great weekend!

Thanks-  
Josh