May 14, 2020

Georgia Department of Corrections Coronavirus (COVID - 19) Response

The Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) is responding with all available resources to help prevent/mitigate the potential introduction and spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) into our facilities. As we continue to work closely with Governor Kemp's office, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) to coordinate the appropriate response to this evolving situation, the GDC has implemented a phased approach to include activating GDC's Pandemic Emergency Response Team, planning and education, preparedness and response.

Phase One - Planning and Education: (Initial Activation)

Activated an interdisciplinary agency task force to evaluate GDC's Emergency Response Plan, Infection Control Plan and other areas that will be affected by COVID-19.

Education of staff and inmate population (to include ADA) regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19) through the Office of the Governor, CDC, Department of Public Health. Information includes but is not limited to symptoms of COVID-19, prevention of COVID-19 hand-washing and sanitation protocols related to the virus.

Evaluated partner agency response to determine impact to GDC: Sheriffs, Dept of Community Supervision, Judicial Branch, Board of Pardons and Paroles.

Phase Two - Preparedness and Preventative Measures:

Inmate Movement:

GDC has stopped all movement into the prison system with the exception of medical emergency and disciplinary moves. When transportation is needed for the above stated reasons it is important to note that hand sanitizer has been increased on all buses and vans and vehicles are sanitized upon completion of of each transport.

Tours and Visitation Restriction:

All prison tours are suspended until further notice.

All volunteer visits are suspended as of March 12, 2020 until further notice.

All visitation will be suspended through June 12, 2020 and be reevaluated as the situation warrants. As a result, several measures were implemented to accommodate the inmate population:

- GDC has partnered with Securus Technologies and JPay to provide each offender with one FREE fifteen (15) minute call each week starting Saturday, March 14, 2020 and 2 FREE stamps each week starting Tuesday, March 17, 2020. The one free call and 2 free stamps per week will continue until further notice as we maintain safety efforts for our offenders, staff and visitors.
- Medical CoPay waived related flu and COVID-19 Symptoms

The GDC has suspended attorneys visits until after June 12, 2020. We will continue to accommodate non-contact attorney visits with offenders if there are emergency situations.

Programming and Details:

Education and Vocation – At this time, programming is suspended; however, the GDC is exploring

opportunities for alternate methods of delivering programs.
Outside Details - suspended (unless emergency)

Staff Actions:
Screening and Sanitation: Enhanced Screening of all staff to include the requirement of staff to sign an Attestation of no known illness questionnaire, and have temperature checks with Temporal Thermometers prior to entry into the facility. Further, Portal Sergeants required to wear gloves and observe hand washing requirements and other sanitation measures as communicated.

Sneeze/cough masks distributed to all staff.

Enhanced Screening of Contractors and vendors to include the requirement of staff to sign an Attestation of no known illness questionnaire and have temperature checks with Temporal Thermometers prior to entry into the facility.

TC Resident screening is being conducted in the same manner as all other GDC facilities.

Enhanced Facility Sanitation: Increased chemical orders statewide, availability of hand sanitizer and soap increased for staff at all GDC locations, increased sanitation rounds and required cleaning of high traffic areas and high touch areas, sanitation officer mandated not to be pulled for other assignments. Increased the availability of soap over and above normal issue for the inmate population as well.

All staff onsite training suspended until further notice and will be reevaluated as the situation warrants. Staff may take online trainings at this time.

Staff Hiring: Staff recruitment and hiring will continue.

Staff Teleworking: Staff designated as non-essential may telework.

Optimizing use of Telecourt, Telemedicine and Telepsychiatry.

Phase Three - Implementation and Response:
Actions for Inmate Population:
Enhanced Facility Sanitation: Increased chemical orders statewide, availability of hand sanitizer and soap increased for staff at all GDC locations, increased sanitation rounds and required cleaning of high traffic areas and high touch areas, sanitation officer mandated not to be pulled for other assignments. Sneeze/cough masks distributed to each offender.

New Intake Screening:
The GDC seeks to minimize the spread of COVID-19 within the prison system by augmenting the intake process. During a Pandemic, transfers may be limited to only those necessary for medical, disciplinary and court returns. We will also restrict movement in the event of a positive screen