IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MDOC's Latest COVID-19 Response

JACKSON – As the Mississippi Department of Corrections remains vigilant in preventing the spread of COVID-19, the department is resuming inmate movement in a limited, controlled, and safe manner.

Meanwhile, visitation at all institutions remains temporarily suspended, and telephone reporting for parolees, probationers, and others on community supervision will continue for the June reporting period.

"We realize that family members want to see their loved ones, and counties are ready to move inmates to our facilities, but we must proceed with caution because we want everyone to be safe," Commissioner Burl Cain said.

Commissioner Cain said the low number of COVID-19 cases in the prison system is largely because the department restricted movement, suspended visitation, and increased cleaning and disinfection practices. Since early March, the department has limited visitation, except for legal visits.

The department reports a total of 45 COVID-19 confirmed inmate and employee cases, of which 28 are inmates and 17 are employees.

Inmates who have been classified and are ready to transfer from the South Mississippi Correctional Institution, Central Mississippi Correctional Facility, and Tallahatchie County Correctional Facility will be quarantined for a minimum of 14 days before being moved to other facilities.

Inmates moved from the county jails to an MDOC facility will be handled similarly.

Routine screenings and temperature checks will be performed daily before each inmate leaves the facility on or after June 12. If the inmate does not clear the screening process, the transfer will be delayed and the protocol for a suspected COVID-19 case, including medical isolation and testing, will be followed.

Transportation employees will wear personal protective equipment (PPE) and transport vehicles will be cleaned before and after each transport.

The department is reviewing plans from sheriffs requesting that the state inmates in their joint county-state work programs be allowed to return to work.

As for those on supervision in the community, they can call between Monday, June 1, and Wednesday, June 17, 2020, from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m. The person answering the call may not be the assigned agent. Individuals also can email their agents or use technology portals, such as Skype and FaceTime, to communicate.

Other MDOC action to slow the spread of COVID-19 includes:

- Screening employees daily when they report to work
- Requiring employees to wear masks
- Conducting extra cleaning and disinfecting high-touched surfaces, such as dining tables, light switches
- Practicing social distancing
- Providing masks, gloves, and antibacterial soap to inmates
- Isolating any inmate tested or presenting symptoms of COVID-19
- Making hand sanitizer available
- Quarantining any housing unit where sick or potentially sick individuals have had direct contact
- Sharing and posting COVID-19 information throughout MDOC facilities and providing handouts to inmates listing the symptoms of COVID-19 and informing them of ways to protect themselves.