NEWS RELEASE
DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION
Commissioner Claire DeMatteis

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Department of Correction suspends all on-site programming to protect against growing threat from COVID-19

Dover, DE — The Delaware Department of Correction (DOC) today announced that, effective immediately, it has suspended all on-site programming in its facilities as a precaution against the spread of COVID-19.

Today's announcement follows restrictions announced on March 22 for on-site program volunteers who are over the age of 60 or have an underlying health condition that could make them more vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus, and a further restriction of non-essential on-site programs announced on March 30.

"As we near a critical time of COVID-19 transmission in our State, the DOC is suspending all in-person programming for two weeks to reduce the potential for the virus to enter our facilities and the threat of widespread contamination," **Commissioner Claire DeMatteis said**. "We are taking this step for two reasons; first, to further reduce the number of people coming into our facilities, and second, to limit as much as possible the movement of groups of people within our facilities. I appreciate the cooperation of our officers, staff, program providers, and inmates who understand that these measures are being taken to protect them."

During this time, inmates continue to have outside recreation opportunities within their confined areas and continue to have access to phones to stay in regular contact with their loved ones. DOC is transitioning prison education and religious services to video and is expanding the use of electronic tablets and other virtual programming, where available.

DOC's Bureau of Healthcare, Substance Abuse and Mental Health is also temporarily delaying routine dental, medical and behavioral health visits that require face-to-face interaction with providers as an additional step to protect against transmission. Emergency and urgent healthcare services, including inmate sick call visits, are continuing.

"The COVID-19 virus is a significant threat to our communities and to our correctional facilities and we are taking every precaution to manage that threat and keep all of our people safe," **said Bureau of Prisons Chief Shane Troxler**.

Get the latest news and information about the DOC's response to COVID-19 on https://doc.delaware.gov and follow DOC at *decorrection* on Facebook and Twitte

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