Governor Newsom Issues Executive Order on State Prisons and Juvenile Facilities in Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak

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No new commitments to state prisons or juvenile facilities will be accepted for the next 30 days

Order also directs videoconferencing of all scheduled parole suitability hearings starting next month

SACRAMENTO — To reduce the risks of COVID-19 in correctional settings, Governor Gavin Newsom today issued an executive order directing the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) Secretary to temporarily halt the intake and/or transfer of inmates and youth into the state's 35 prisons and four youth correctional facilities. Those inmates and youth will remain in county custody for the next 30 days. This period can be extended if needed. This action builds on the state and local correctional and public safety leaders' longstanding partnership, to protect public health and safety in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. The emergency authority is granted to the Governor under the Emergency Services Act and to the CDCR Secretary under Cal Penal Code section 2900(b).

"The State of California is responding in real time and fighting hard to deploy every resource to reduce the spread of COVID-19, and we are working with our public health experts, corrections system and our local sheriff's departments to ensure proper protocols and procedures are in place to effectively limit risks in correctional facilities," said Governor Newsom.

Additionally, the executive order directs the Board of Parole Hearings to develop a process to conduct all scheduled parole suitability hearings through videoconferencing starting no later than April 13, 2020, and for the next 60 days. That process would facilitate remote participation of those typically in attendance, including staff, parole board members, victims, families and their representatives, inmates, attorneys, and others.

The order was issued to protect the health, safety and welfare of state inmates, youth, and staff following the recent confirmed COVID-19 cases in four separate state prisons affecting five correctional officers and one inmate.

A copy of the Governor's executive order can be found here and the text of the order can also be found here.

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