FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 24, 2020

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UPDATED - FDC PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT: COVID-19

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — TheFlorida Department of Corrections (FDC), in conjunction with Florida Department of Health (DOH) and the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM), are closely monitoring developments associated with COVID-19. FDC is prepared to handle any potential cases of COVID-19 within the state-operated correctional institutions in Florida.

FDC Correctional Institution Employee Tests Positive for COVID-19

On Sunday, March 22, an employee at Marion Correctional Institution Work Camp (MCIWC) was confirmed positive for COVID-19. The employee has been out of work for eight days and will not return to work until a full recovery is documented by a medical professional and DOH and CDC guidelines are followed.

- At this time, all inmates and staff at MCIWC are asymptomatic.
- MCIWC has an inmate population of 274. The facility is on restricted movement – only essential staff will be allowed to enter the institution and no inmates will transfer in or out. While inmates are on restricted movement, they still have access to washrooms, showers and medical care. Meals are provided to the inmates within their housing units.
- FDC is working closely with the DOH in Marion County to conduct a trace-back contact investigation and determine if additional staff or inmates need to be tested due to close contact risk factors.
- Three staff members have currently been identified as having close contact with the employee and will be self-isolating and placed on leave until they are symptom free for a period of 14 days following their last contact with the positive individual.
- All staff entering the facility will continue to be screened.

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FDC COVID-19 Action Items

FDC's Office of Health Services, institutional medical staff and institutional operations staff work hand-in-hand with the Florida DOH to quickly engage and resolve infectious disease outbreaks as soon as they occur.

- FDC has a plan in place and dedicated staff members trained in the prevention and containment of infectious diseases.
- FDC's Office of Health Services coordinates with the Florida DOH for guidance on any type of outbreak and is closely monitoring new information as it is disseminated from Florida DOH (http://www.floridahealth.gov/covid-19) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html).
- FDC initiated its Incident Command System in response to COVID-19.
- FDC Community Corrections officers are working with offenders on supervision to adjust reporting schedules to minimize congregating at probation offices and prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Following the State of Emergency issued in response to COVID-19 in Florida, FDC has suspended visitation at all correctional institutions statewide. See press release (http://www.dc.state.fl.us/comm/press/main/03-11-Covid.html).
  - The visitation suspension will be in effect through April 5, 2020. The decision to reinstate the normal visitation schedule will be evaluated in consultation with the Department of Health.
  - Inmates will continue to have access to their loved ones through mail, phone calls and video visitation. Legal visits will not be impacted.
  - FDC has partnered with vendors to provide some complimentary phone and video visitation services. See press release (http://www.dc.state.fl.us/comm/press/main/03-12-Covid-Support.html).
- Anyone entering a correctional institution will be screened, and entrance will be restricted if they:
  - Have traveled internationally or on a cruise within the last 14 days.
  - Have signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection such as fever, cough or shortness of breath.
  - Have had contact with someone who has been or is under investigation for COVID-19.
- Medical co-pays for inmates who are experiencing flu-like or respiratory symptoms are being waived. Inmates are never denied medical treatment for the inability to pay a co-pay.
- Outside inmate work squads have been restricted. FDC will continue to coordinate efforts with FDOT.
- All non-critical inmate transfers have been suspended.
- New inmate commitments from county jails have been temporarily restricted. FDC is working closely with the Florida Sheriff's Association regarding this temporary measure.
- Volunteer activities have been suspended statewide.
- All Community Release Centers have suspended furloughs for inmates, in order to limit the inmate population's exposure to the public.
- Education has been provided to staff, inmates and visitors to prevent the spread of any infectious disease, including COVID-19.
- Precautions are in place at facilities to protect inmates and staff from exposure to flu or any other respiratory illness; preventative measures are being followed per CDC recommendations (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html).

Ensuring inmates incarcerated in Florida's prisons receive all medically necessary medical and behavioral treatment is one of FDC's core constitutional responsibilities. FDC ensures an appropriate level of health care is provided to all inmates and FDC's medical provider is held accountable for care in line with evolving national standards.

(http://www.floridahealth.gov/covid-19)

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As Florida's largest state agency, and the third largest state prison system in the country, FDC employs 24,000 members, incarcerates approximately 90,000 inmates and supervises nearly 155,000 offenders in the community.

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Inspiring success by transforming one life at a time. *Visit our website at http://www.dc.state.fl.us (http://www.dc.state.fl.us).*

About Us (/about.html)

As Florida's largest state agency, and the third largest state prison system in the country, FDC employs 24,000 members, incarcerates 80,000 inmates and supervises nearly 145,000 offenders in the community.

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