NEWS RELEASE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

Commissioner Claire DeMatteis

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Department of Correction temporarily modifies community-based group treatment for probationers to support COVID-19 response

Dover, DE – The Delaware Department of Correction (DOC) today announced an immediate two-week suspension of all group treatment programs at Probation and Parole offices to help reduce community spread of COVID-19.

"Group treatment for offenders on probation supports our dual mission of public safety and offender rehabilitation," **said Bureau of Community Corrections Chief Marvin Mailey.** "We are temporarily suspending group treatment in the interest of public health and the well-being of our staff, treatment providers and probationers. These offenders continue to be supervised by their assigned Probation Officers and will have ongoing contact with treatment providers to support their reentry success."

DOC emphasizes that group program treatment providers have been directed to make and maintain contact with probationers who are enrolled in treatment programs via telephone as a "check-in" and to immediately report any concerns or inability to contact a probationer to the assigned Probation Officer and Probation Supervisor. Treatment providers will provide "check-in" updates to the assigned Probation Officer on a weekly basis.

Last week, DOC's Bureau of Community Corrections transitioned most in-person visits with Probation Officers to phone visits in an effort to support the social distancing measures of the state's COVID-19 response. Certain high-risk probationers continue to be required to meet in person with their Probation Officers at Probation and Parole offices, where significant precautions are being taken to screen individuals upon arrival and to limit contact. DOC's Probation and Parole Officers supervise more than 12,000 individuals statewide.

The two week suspension, from March 25 to April 10, will be reevaluated in early April.

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