Dear DOC employees,

I'm writing to let you know about measures we are implementing effective immediately as part of our continued efforts to keep all of you safe and prevent COVID-19 from entering our facilities.

As always, please take direction for your role in implementing these changes from your supervisor, but I wanted to be sure you had information about our planning as we make decisions.

1) **Waive medical copays**

   Agency policy change in which inmates presenting for medical assessment or treatment of COVID symptoms will have the typical co-pay of $5 waived.

   The agency is committed to ensuring that individual economic concerns do not limit an inmate's willingness to seek medical care flu-like symptoms

2) **Cancel in-person visiting**

   Effective immediately, in-person visiting in all Minnesota correctional facilities will be discontinued.

   Professional visits will continue, emphasizing phone calls and video conferences/visits, or non-contact visits if necessary.

3) **Working with vendors for expanded video visiting access**

   DOC is working with the agency's video visiting and tablet vendors to provide no cost video visiting to allow incarcerated people to maintain pro-social contact with family members.

4) **Postpone March/April Education Graduations**

   All graduation ceremonies held at DOC correctional facilities are being postponed until further notice.

   The DOC recognizes that academic success is one of many proven strategies for reducing the likelihood of return to prison.

   Correctional facility graduation ceremonies are important methods of recognizing and reinforcing accomplishments that serve the interests of both the incarcerated persons, their families, and the people of Minnesota through reduced offending.

   The DOC will look to recognize the accomplishments of these graduates when the current health concerns are not so acute.

5) **Cancel all off-site travel for inmates, including work crews.**

All work crews and other off site travel for inmates is being canceled.

6) **Enhance handwashing and hand sanitizing procedures**

   The DOC is working to deploy additional handwashing and hand-sanitizing stations for use by anyone entering and exiting the state's correctional facilities.

7) **Provide and make available additional bars of soap**

   The DOC provides hand soap for incarcerated people. We will be distributing extra bars of soap to each facility to ensure a sufficient supply.

8) **Begin symptom screening for staff, contractors, vendors, and incarcerated persons**

   DOC health services is currently developing a symptom screening tool for staff, contractors, vendors, and incarcerated persons.

9) **Increase signage at entry points for all DOC locations**

   DOC is developing signs that will be posted at all the state's correctional facilities and field services offices.

10) **Tele-work**

    DOC has established a workgroup to quickly address the immediate short-term policies and procedures necessary for broad tele-work across the agency.

11) **ILI (influenza like illness) guidelines**

    We updated guidance for facility health services staff for procedures to follow when an inmate exhibits symptoms.

12) **Cancel all out of state travel and in-state attendance at conferences and training.**

    Effective immediately, out of state travel, excluding CTU interstate inmate transfers, will be cancelled. Under rare circumstances, when training is deemed a critical need and not otherwise immediately available, an assistant and deputy commissioner may consider out of state travel on a case by case basis.

13) **Monitoring food, medical and cleaning supplies daily**

    DOC is monitoring its food and medical and cleaning supplies daily.

Thank you for everything you do.

Michelle Smith