DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Mar. 12, 2020

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES SUSPENDING INMATE PERSONAL VISITS

HONOLULU – Public Safety Department Director Nolan Espinda announced, effective tomorrow (3/13/20) and until further notice, all correctional facilities will be suspending inmate personal visits. At this point this action does not impact the continuation of other scheduled official and attorney visits.

“We understand how important visits are to the inmates as well as their family members, but we also understand that COVID-19 may eventually be present at one of our facilities and that is why, out of an abundance of caution, we are suspending personal visits at our facilities statewide,” said Director Espinda. “The health and safety of the public, our staff and the inmates they oversee is of paramount importance to us, and we are taking steps to protect them.”

The Department of Public Safety Health Care Division has gone to great lengths to make sure a comprehensive plan is in place to safeguard the health of all inmates and staff in the correctional facilities. No inmates have met PUI (Persons Under Investigation) criteria for COVID-19. Health care staff have had continuous, open dialogue with the Department of Health, and all facility staff have been fully briefed on the protocol.

Health Care staff have been making themselves available in the inmate housing units to answer questions from inmates. They are reminding the inmates of proactive ways they can help prevent the spread of germs, including covering their coughs and sneezes, frequent handwashing, sanitizing their common living areas, refraining from sharing cups and utensils with others, and limiting close contact. Educational posters reinforcing good hygiene and germ prevention have been posted in all common areas. They have also been reminded, if they aren't feeling well, to report it immediately.

Recently, the PSD administration directed staff to increase the frequency of cleaning/sanitizing high-use areas within civilian offices and facilities, along with ensuring adequate access to cleaning materials and hand soap for all. Daily emails with the latest COVID-19 information, guidance and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and from the Hawaii Department of Health are being sent to all employees to keep everyone informed.

The Public Safety Department encourages everyone to visit the Hawaii Department of Health COVID-19 webpage for the most up-to-date information on the virus at www.health.hawaii.gov/covid19. They can also get connected through 211.

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