STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
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Helen E. Hanks
Commissioner

Benjamin R. Jean
Assistant Commissioner

Date: 3/23/2020
Re: COVID-19 Response Summary

The New Hampshire Department of Corrections has been committed to preventing COVID-19 from entering our facilities during this pandemic. In order to respond to COVID-19, we added additional preventative measures overlaid with our regular screening for influenza. Here are some of the things we have had in place along with extra measures specific to the evolution of COVID-19.

- Beginning January 29th 2020,
  - Information regarding handwashing and cough etiquette was provided to both residents and staff.
  - All visitors/volunteers entering our facilities and individuals being booked into our facilities were screened with travel related questions associated with COVID-19. Healthcare staff also began to triage for signs and symptoms as indicated by the screening tool and continue to do so to date.

- The week of March 2rd,
  - We adjusted our COVID-19 screening tool based on new CDC guidelines for visitors prior to entering facilities.
  - The resident screening tool was also adjusted per new CDC guidelines. This included new intakes, returns from county correctional facilities, parole violators, At Home Confinements, returns from other state correctional facilities, admissions from New Hampshire Hospital, etc.
  - COVID-19 specific information was provided to both residents through tablet technology and posting.
  - Staff were provided additional information as well about frequent handwashing and cough etiquette.
  - We increased the frequency of our cleaning regiments in our facilities.

- The week of March 9th,
  - All visitors were required to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer in addition to the COVID-19 screening prior to being allowed to visit.

- Resident transfers and intakes required a health screen including temperature check prior to accepting anyone to be booked into a facility from any location (e.g. House of Corrections) and a call ahead confirming medical clearance.
- We also began distributing hand sanitizing products to our staff, visiting rooms and other key locations.
- Waived medical co-pays to residents for assessment of fever, cough, shortness of breath, flu-like symptoms.

- The week of March 16th,
  - Suspended visits to prevent introduction of the virus into the facilities.
  - Suspended volunteers and interns from coming into facilities to prevent introduction of the virus.
  - Instituted expanded screening of all staff and essential vendors coming into facilities which included a temperature check.
  - Limiting transfers between facilities and limiting staff going to different facilities to prevent introduction of the virus into the facilities.
  - Behavioral health staff are visiting units, providing information regarding stress reduction and answering questions residents may have. The have also created a video treatment library for continued care.

- The week of March 23rd,
  - Extended the education floor break to April 3rd (added one additional week rather than the standard two weeks) Education staff will work to enhance correspondence style offerings to students.
  - The library will be establishing procedures to reduce physical assess while still providing books for lending.
  - No behavioral health groups will be held on the behavioral health floors; behavioral health is developing videos for groups and will be providing other services. Behavioral Health Staff will still be focused on responder duties, reception and diagnostics and Special Housing Unit screenings/monitoring and will provide self-care materials to units as available/necessary.
  - No chapel services will be held in the chapel. Chaplain staff will work to deliver resources to the units;
  - No peer supporters will be utilized at this time.
  - No Community-based TWC jobs/work crews will go out to the community (only on prison grounds work) at this time.
  - A reduction of activity in all Industries related work sites and Hobby Craft/Recreation work sites to less than 10 resident workers. A 10 resident workers schedule will be set up on a two week rotating cycle.
  - We will keep recreation spaces, north yard and hobby craft open as long as we can to provide relief while balancing social distancing.

- Each facility will work to establish recreation activities (including weight room/gym access) by housing unit.

The Department has been in close contact with NH leadership, continues to monitor the CDC guidelines and is coordinating with other state partners to provide a comprehensive response. This is not intended to be an all-inclusive outline of Departmental activities but a broad outline of the actions we have taken. The health of our staff and residents is our top priority.

For the latest information and updates on COVID-19 in New Hampshire, go to www.nh.gov/covid19.