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Family and Friends Newsletter-June 2020

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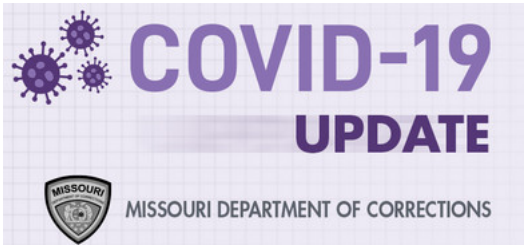
Missouri Department of Corrections

Family and Friends Newsletter | June 2020

COVID-19 Sentinel Testing



Increased testing capacity is one of the four major components of Missouri's Show Me Strong Recovery Plan. Sentinel testing is part of the increased testing. Sentinel testing is a term used for the strategy of testing most or all members of a large group of people living or working together in close contact, even if there are no known cases in that location. Each state correctional facility will undergo sentinel testing.

Communicable diseases such as COVID-19 can spread rapidly among people in close contact or in a confined space. Our goal is to keep Missourians in these spaces safe and healthy. Containing the spread of the virus requires quickly identifying people who might be infected, including those who are asymptomatic, and isolating them from other residents or staff. Widespread testing of a confined population gives managers and health care professionals the information they need to stop the virus within that location and keep it from spreading.

Correctional facilities already have a viral containment strategy in place, including a plan for isolating people who test positive for the virus. Anyone who tests positive and anyone with whom that person had close contact will be isolated. For staff, that means leaving the facility and isolating at home. For offenders, that means entering isolated housing at the facility.

Constituent Services

For location and general information about an offender, please utilize the offender search.

For general information about operations, visit the Department of Corrections website.

For specific questions or concerns regarding an offender, please contact the offender's assigned case manager or Constituent Services at 573-526-2695.

If leaving a message, please be sure to include the offender's full name, location and, if available, Department of Corrections number.

Staying Connected During COVID-19

To reduce risk, the visiting suspension will continue through June 18, 2020. At that time, corrections and health administrators will reassess the state of our public health crisis and make decisions about the next steps. Department administrators currently are working with offender councils, facility staff and public health experts to determine when and how we can safely resume visiting in facilities throughout the state. We know staying connected to your

loved ones is important, and we're working to balance that need for contact with a need to safeguard the health of offenders and staff in our facilities.

Please continue to stay in touch using the eight free email stamps JPay provides to each offender each month and the two free phone calls Securus provides to each offender each week. Additionally, letters may be sent and received. We appreciate your patience and support in our efforts to protect incarcerated Missourians during this difficult time.

Feeding Missourians

To help feed Missourians during the COVID-19 pandemic, The Department of Social Services is coordinating plant donations to prison gardens where offender-volunteers grow fresh produce to donate to Missouri food banks. The 1,084 tomato and 871 bell pepper plants donated so far could yield 32,000 pounds of produce for Missouri communities.

Resources for Families of Incarcerated Individuals

DHSS-provides guidance and information about Missouri's response to COViD-19.

Missouri Department of Corrections

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