Nevada Department of Corrections

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Press Release

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NDOC Expands COVID-19 Testing

The Nevada Department of Corrections (NDOC) has begun implementing a testing framework to ensure all Nevada staff and offenders are tested for COVID-19.

The framework, developed in coordination with the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services and the Nevada State Public Health Laboratory (NSPHL), will help prevent asymptomatic transmission of the virus. NSPHL will provide specimen testing for NDOC facilities and has the ability to test about 500 specimens daily.

"Our medical staff has worked tirelessly to test staff and offenders at High Desert State Prison (HDSP)," said Charles Daniels, NDOC Director. "Our goal is to mitigate and prevent the spread of COVID-19 through rigorous testing and the implementation of deliberate and pro-active protocols. I am proud of the partnership we have with Nevada's lab and health department in addressing this issue to protect the health of everyone at NDOC."

On Monday, offenders at HDSP's intake unit were tested. Three positive cases of COVID-19 were identified, in addition to one male offender at HDSP who tested positive last week. All four offenders came from Clark County Detention Center and were undergoing health, mental, and physical screening when they were tested for COVID-19. Standard intake operations require all offenders be isolated for a minimum of 20 days, which allows NDOC medical staff to monitor for symptoms during the generally accepted 14-day incubation period of COVID-19.

On Tuesday, NDOC tested staff at HDSP and offenders currently housed in the prison's other units. Currently, NDOC is distributing 5,000 tests to medical staff in southern Nevada and 3,000 tests to medical staff in northern Nevada, and expanding its campaign to conduct widespread testing of staff and offenders throughout the State.

While testing is underway, NDOC continues to implement other procedures to stop the spread of COVID-19. These include:

The Nevada Department of Corrections is committed to building a safer community by striving to incorporate progressive best practices in all aspects of corrections. NDOC houses more than 12,000 persons with felony convictions in 18 facilities statewide. For more information visit www.doc.nv.gov.

- Running modified operations, which includes travel and visitation restrictions, at all facilities.
- Offenders who test positive are isolated in negative airflow rooms in the facility's infirmary.
- Staff who test positive are released from duty to begin quarantine. They will return to work only after receiving approval from NDOC's medical director.
- Staff at HDSP's intake unit have been issued full personal protective equipment (PPE), to include booties, gloves, and N-95 masks. NDOC has an adequate stockpile of PPE and can deploy it to other facilities if needed.
- Wardens and their executive teams continue regularly scheduled town halls to update staff and offenders on NDOC procedures.

NDOC will continue to work closely with local and state public health officials to ensure the health and safety of staff and offenders.

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