DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

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MASS TESTING AT ALL PRISONS AND JAILS STARTS WITH THE WAIAWA CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

HONOLULU – The Hawaii Department of Public Safety (PSD) Health Care Division is working with the Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) to conduct mass testing for COVID-19 at all correctional facilities statewide. The testing, administered by PSD health care nurses, began today with the Waiawa Correctional Facility (WCF). The broad-based testing, which started this morning at the facility, was expertly coordinated by the WCF warden, his security staff, and the PSD Health Care Division.

“We anticipate test results to take up to 3 days to receive. The WCF warden has been preparing the facility and is ready to go with their pandemic plan for inmate isolation, quarantine and cohorting, if it is needed,” said Maria Cook, Deputy Director for Administration/Acting Director.

The order of the facilities next in line for testing is still being worked out. The Department will also work with DOH and the National Guard to coordinate the testing of correctional officers and staff.

“We are encouraged by the low numbers we are seeing at OCCC, and are confident that the other facilities are doing everything in their power to safeguard the inmates under their care and supervision, as well as promoting the health and safety of the staff,” said Deputy Director/Acting Director Cook.

PSD staff continue to practice recommended precautions for the health and safety of the public, our staff and the inmates under our supervision including the use of proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). All facilities have been issued PPE and routinely keep an inventory of PPE for continuous distribution to staff as recommended in the Pandemic Plan. Each employee has been issued several face masks and OCCC employees have a face shields for added protection. All other facilities have been provided face shield for distribution to staff. Staff have access to gloves and other protective supplies, available all over the facility.

For more information on PSD’s planning and response to COVID-19, inmate testing data, and information detailing the efforts made to safeguard the inmates, staff and public, visit our webpage at: http://dps.hawaii.gov/blog/2020/03/17/coronavirus-covid-19-information-and-resources/