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JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

RANDALL A. LIBERTY
COMMISSIONER

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PRESS RELEASE

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Department of Corrections Prepares for COVID-19 Concerns

There are no confirmed or suspected cases within the Maine DOC.

Ensuring the safety and security of our clients, staff, volunteers, vendors and others who have business with the Department of Corrections is paramount.

"We're working closely with the Maine CDC and Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)" says Commissioner Randall A. Liberty, "taking a phased approach to prevention, preparedness, and management of COVID-19".

The first phase, which we began on Tuesday, March 8, 2020 consisted of increased cleaning practices, similar to those taken during influenza outbreaks; staff training; review of policy and practices; posting and disseminating of information about COVID-19 from U.S. CDC; encouraged flu vaccines; count of supplies for use during virus outbreaks; and other prevention and preparation practices related to human resources.

A decision to move into phase two came on Friday, March 13 in response to the number of presumptive cases in Maine communities. Moving into phase two allows the Department to continue afore mentioned cleaning practices while also putting into place actions to reduce the likelihood of COVID-19 coming into our facilities.

As part of phase two, effective March 14 the following practices have gone into place:

- Facilities have suspended all visits. This includes visits from family, friends, other non-professional visitors and volunteers who lead programs and activities. The Department is actively working on reducing or eliminating phone commission rates during this time.
- Alternate reporting requirements for adult and juvenile probation clients have gone into effect.
- Home visits, site visits, and field work performed by adult and juvenile probation staff have been suspended. Staff will continue to report to assigned offices, as normal.
- The Prison Showroom in Thomaston will be closed.

Effective as of 6pm, March 18, as part of phase two, work release and community work programs will be suspended. This includes community restitution crews, Apprenticeship program, DOC inmate volunteers' program, work release and the Prison Showroom in Thomaston.

In consultation with Maine CDC, DOC staff and our contracted health provider, Wellpath, have reviewed and updated previously developed protocols for virial outbreaks. These protocols have been enhanced to align with the U.S. CDC's recommendations for COVID-19. Plans are in place inside DOC facilities related to limiting any potential exposure, isolation practices among concerns of potential or confirmed exposure, and use of personal protective equipment.

All DOC clients have been provided U.S. CDC information about COVID-19. Individuals are aware of symptoms and encouraged to practice increased hand washing and observe other measures to reduce the spread of germs.

A third and final phase for the preparation and management of COVID-19 will go in to place should there be a case that directly impacts the State's correctional practices. A decision about phase three will be made in consultation with Maine CDC, MEMA and Governor Mills.

"The health, wellness and safety of clients, staff, visitors and those who have business with the Department is our highest priority", says Commissioner Liberty. "In keeping with national trends to reduce the spread of COVID-19 the Department of Corrections will do everything in our power to prevent, prepare for and manage COVID-19".

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