

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

COVID-19 Response

An ongoing effort

Law and Justice Interim Committee

May 12, 2020



TIMELINE OF KEY DECISIONS

EDUCATION BEGINS

3/2/2020 - Clinical staff begin distributing educational materials related to COVID-19 to all DOC facility staff and inmates.

VISITATION (IN PERSON) SUSPENDED

3/13/2020 - The DOC suspends in-person visitation at its secure facilities. This includes volunteer activities and visits by non-essential contractors.

GOVERNOR SUSPENDS INMATE MOVEMENT

4/1/2020 - Governor Bullock issues declaration suspending inmate movement, outlining parameters for BOPP for early release.

DOC working with DPHHS, community partners to strategically resume inmate movement, visitation.

INMATE SCREENING

3/10/2020 - Clinical staff begin screening all inmates coming to DOC facilities. Offenders coming from states with COVID-19 cases quarantined.

STAFF SCREENING

3/19/2020 - Staff screening implemented at all DOC facilities.

GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES PHASED REOPENING OF STATE

4/22/2020 - Governor Bullock announces phased approach to reopen state. Inmate movement, visitation remains suspended.



Successes



SWIFT ACTION

DOC staff moved quickly to make changes necessary to mitigate the risk of COVID-19. This meant implementing new processes, assisting with tasks outside of their normal duties, and much more. DOC staff members went, and continue to go, above and beyond.

SUPPORTING STAFF, INMATES

The past couple of months have been an uncertain time for everyone. Information is our best defense, and the DOC's Clinical Services Division rose to the occasion. The doctors, RNs and support staff have been educating staff and inmates since late February. Health care staff have visited the prison units to answer questions. The DOC also established a hotline and email to provide answers to questions from DOC employees.



NEW WAYS OF DOING BUSINESS

From P&P officers to our victim liaisons, DOC staff throughout the state adjusted to a "new normal" as they shifted their operations. P&P officers swapped non-emergency face-to-face meetings with offenders with phone calls, FaceTime and socially distanced visits. Victim liaisons even conducted Victim Impact Panels via Zoom. All continued to be available to respond in emergencies.



MCE PPE PRODUCTION

In an effort to meet the PPE requirements of the DOC, Montana Correctional Enterprises began manufacturing cloth masks, gowns, N95 masks and more. PPE was distributed within the department first (to staff and inmates), and production has since shifted to preparing orders for organizations including MHP, health facilities, etc.



By the Numbers

**Offenders who tested
positive for COVID-19:**

2

**Both offenders were from
Gallatin Re-entry Program in
Bozeman.
(4/27/2020)**

**Staff members who
tested positive for
COVID-19:**

3

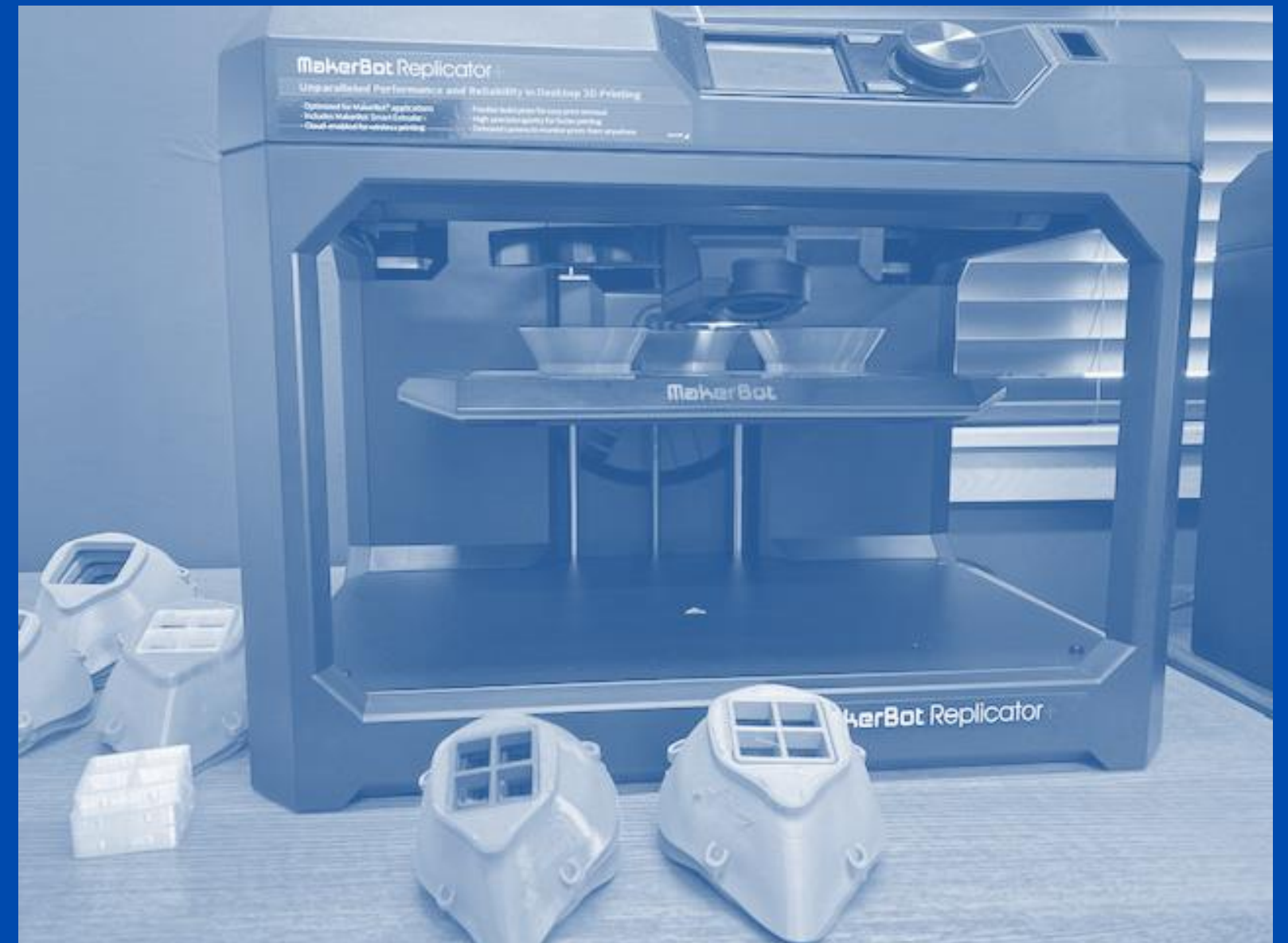
**1 DOC employee
2 contractor employees
(4/27/2020)**

By the Numbers: PPE

Since the beginning of April, inmate workers at Montana Correctional Enterprises have produced:

- 6,148 – cloth sneeze guards
- 1,709 – disposable gowns
- 1,661 – face shields
- 1,432 – disposable cap/head covers
- 1,115 – disposable bootie/shoe covers
- 315 – N95 fabric cover
- 200 – 3D masks

Total – 12,580



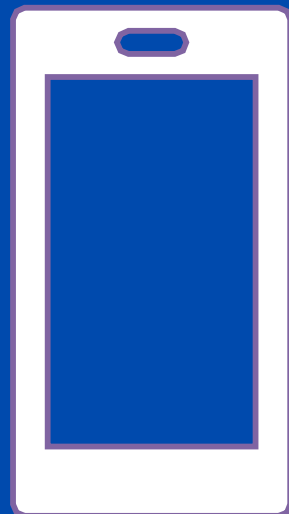
By the Numbers: Inmate calls, video visits

To help inmates and their families cope with the COVID-19 crisis, CenturyLink agreed to provide one free phone call and one free video visit per inmate every week. This is how many calls and video visits have been provided at all our DOC facilities:

Free calls

April – 3,469

May – 1,089



Free video visitation

April – 2,174

May - 634



CONSIDERATION FOR EARLY RELEASE

DOC SUPPORT OF BOARD OF PARDONS & PAROLE

The DOC assisted the Montana Board of Pardons and Parole in identifying offenders who met criteria for consideration for early release as outlined in Governor Bullock's April 1 directive. Overall, BOPP:

- reviewed 190 cases in prisons – released three and set five for formal hearings
- reviewed 107 cases from county jails (pending revocations) - released four back to supervision, action taken to move four others into community corrections programs, setting up 28 revocation hearings from the county jail
- reviewed four cases at prerelease centers – released three to supervision
- reviewed more than 100 cases received via emails, kites, phone calls

In addition, the board conducted its regularly scheduled hearings last month, totaling 193. The board also released 90 people to parole supervision in April.



What's Next?



CONSULTATION

The department, with the guidance of its Clinical Services staff, is consulting with DPHHS, the governor's office, and more to determine a timeline to resume activities that ensures health and safety of staff, inmates, and the public.



RESUME INTERNAL MOVEMENT

Once a timeline is established based on clinical considerations, DOC staff must resume internal movement before inmates may be accepted from external locations. Staff is communicating with partners in the community regarding this effort.



RESUME TRANSPORT, PROGRAMMING, VISITATION

These activities will occur in phases at DOC facilities. It is of utmost importance the COVID-19 virus is not introduced into our local, state or contracted facilities.

QUESTIONS?

