



Montana Department of Corrections

Programs & Facilities Bureau

Steve Bullock, Governor

Reginald Michael, Director

TO: Residents in DOC Assessment/Sanction Centers, Treatment Facilities, and Prerelease Centers

RE: COVID-19 Response

DATE: 03/31/2020

The Montana Department of Corrections wants to assure you that the safety of people in our custody is our highest priority. We are working with facility management staff to ensure precautions are being taken at each facility to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and confirm appropriate medical services are available. We have received a number of questions from inmates and hope the following will help to answer those:

Questions and Answers:

What precautions are you taking for the health of program residents? Each facility has developed an internal plan of action to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Those plans include:

- Increased cleaning of facilities
- Education for residents regarding COVID-19, its spread, and preventive measures such as social distancing and hand washing
- Limits on visitors to the facility
- Changes to meal processes to increase social distancing and communal use of items
- Suspension of group activities
- Changes to drug testing processes
- Monitoring of residents for COVID-19 symptoms

Inquiries regarding a facility's specific procedures should be directed to that facility's staff.

Are residents being considered for early release? At this time, our focus is on minimizing risk of COVID-19 exposure and preventing spread. Each case is being managed on an individualized basis, taking into consideration the resident's need and circumstances. If you believe your circumstances warrant additional consideration because of your unique health concerns, please speak with the medical and case management staff at the facility.

Are COVID-19 tests available for program residents? Medical providers for community corrections facilities are using the same Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-directed criteria that community-based providers are using to determine if testing is necessary. Additionally, staff at all facilities is taking general precautions to monitor residents for symptoms and respond accordingly. Each facility has developed protocols should the need to isolate and/or quarantine residents become necessary.

How is the DOC responding to financial impacts to residents due to COVID-19? Should a resident be laid off from work due to COVID-19, they should apply for unemployment benefits as soon as possible and seek other employment. Case management staff at facilities should be able to assist with these processes. Additionally, if a resident has started the release process, they may be eligible for Transitional Assistance funds to assist with costs associated with release such as transportation and rental assistance. These applications must be submitted to the DOC by facility staff.

For more information about the COVID-19 virus, visit covid19.mt.gov.