

NEWS RELEASE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

Commissioner Claire DeMatteis

Presented by **Jason P. Miller, Chief of Communications and Community Relations**

245 McKee Road | Dover, DE 19904 | Office: 302.857.5232 | jason.miller@delaware.gov

DOC's aggressive COVID-19 mitigation efforts identify new inmate COVID cases

Dover, DE -- The Delaware Department of Correction (DOC) today announced that it has received the first new inmate COVID-19 test results since May 21. These results come as the DOC has continued to employ its comprehensive COVID-19 mitigation strategy to guard against the spread of the novel coronavirus.

The new inmate test results include:

- One asymptomatic inmate from Sussex Correctional Institution (SCI) who contracted COVID-19 in the community. When the inmate arrived at the facility last week, he was identified as high risk when the intake process revealed that he had close contact with a COVID-19 patient in the community. The inmate was immediately isolated and a COVID-19 test was administered. The positive test result was received on June 29
- One inmate from Morris Community Corrections Center (MCCC) who was transferred to that facility from SCI last week. The inmate had been isolated and was being closely monitored during his first 14 days at the facility as part of DOC's COVID-19 protocol. When a daily temperature check revealed a fever, a COVID-19 test was administered. The positive test result was received on June 29.
- One inmate from SCI who received a COVID-19 test on July 1 at an area hospital while being treated for a medical condition. The positive test result was received on the afternoon of July 1.

"Our aggressive screening, monitoring, and testing procedures have worked as intended to identify new inmate COVID-19 cases early, and these inmates are receiving excellent care," **Department of Correction Commissioner Claire DeMatteis said.** "Today, just three inmates statewide have COVID-19, while 141 inmates have fully recovered. Our comprehensive mitigation strategy remains the key to containing this illness in our correctional system."

Two of the three COVID-positive inmates have been transferred to the JTVCC COVID-19 Treatment Center, while the inmate from SCI who was diagnosed with COVID at an area hospital remains at that hospital.

No additional information will be provided about the identity of the inmates for privacy protection.

Because the new COVID-19 test results have come from SCI inmates, the DOC is taking the following additional mitigation measures at that facility:

- Contact tracing is being used to identify, isolate and test individuals who came into sustained contact with the COVID-positive inmates.
- All inmates in the two housing units in which the COVID-positive inmates had been assigned have been quarantined and are receiving twice daily temperature checks.
- All SCI inmates are being issued face masks.
- In-person visitation at SCI is suspended effective immediately as a precaution to protect inmates and staff from transmission of the illness. In-person visitation had resumed earlier this week across DOC facilities. Note: In-person visitation at other DOC facilities will continue at this time with current restrictions in place.
- Voluntary COVID-19 testing is being offered to all SCI staff in recognition that the greatest threat to correctional institutions remains transmission from the community.
- Additional deep cleaning, including decontamination with specialized fogging machines, is being conducted.

Currently seven DOC staff across all DOC facilities and one healthcare contractor assigned to a DOC facility have COVID-19, while 87 DOC staff and healthcare contractors assigned to DOC facilities have recovered from the illness.

Review an informational chart of COVID-19 recoveries and cases among DOC employees, contracted staff and inmates for each DOC facility [by clicking HERE](#).

The DOC continues to employ a variety of prevention, screening, cleaning and containment measures to guard against the spread of the novel coronavirus, including:

- All persons, including Officers, administrative staff and probationers who enter any Level V prison, Level IV violation of probation or work release center, or Probation and Parole Office are screened for COVID-19, including a series of questions and a forehead temperature check with a thermometer
- Staff who present with symptoms are sent home to self-quarantine and directed to contact their health care provider.
- Newly arriving inmates are held in isolation for the first 14 days, during which they are carefully monitored, including daily temperature checks with a thermometer.
- DOC has implemented extra daily cleaning of DOC facilities and is using specialized fogging machines to disinfect entire rooms of common areas, housing units and workspaces.
- Face masks are being worn by Correctional Officers and contract healthcare workers as a protection for inmates, Officers and other employees. All Correctional Officers have been wearing face masks since April 10.
- **Face masks have been provided to more than half of DOC's inmate population, including inmates who are in infirmaries, those with compromised immune systems, those with certain institutional jobs, such as food service, all inmates at the James T.**

Vaughn Correctional Center and the Sussex Community Corrections Center and nearly 250 inmates at Howard R. Young Correctional Institution.

- Most Probationer visits with Probation Officers were transitioned to phone check-ins in March to support social distancing measures.

In addition, the DOC has temporarily suspended in-person prison programming to reduce the movement of people into facilities and movement of groups of people within facilities. Certain programs, including treatment and education programs and religious programming, have been transitioned to a virtual video format. Inmates continue to have outside recreation opportunities within their confined areas and continue to have access to phones to stay in regular contact with their loved ones. DOC is also expanding the use of electronic tablets among the inmate population, where available.

Get updated information about the DOC's response to COVID-19 and read previous announcements of positive COVID-19 cases by visiting <https://doc.delaware.gov>, and follow *decorrection* on Facebook and Twitter.