

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 identifies cluster of inmate COVID-19 cases at one correctional facility

Cases isolated to one housing building; aggressive screening, testing, and mitigation underway

Dover, DE - Proactive screening and testing have identified a cluster of inmate COVID-19 cases in one housing building at James T. Vaughn Correctional Center (JTVCC), the state's largest prison in Smyrna, the Department of Correction announced today.

With significant community spread throughout the state and the increased risk of the infectious virus entering a correctional facility, DOC implemented daily temperature and pulse oxygen level checks for inmates at several prisons and work release centers, on top of existing rigorous prevention, screening, testing and cleaning efforts. Since Friday, November 13, screening measures and rapid COVID-19 tests have identified 18 positive cases in one housing building at JTVCC. Six of the inmates are displaying no symptoms and 12 are displaying only minor symptoms; all have been transferred to the JTVCC COVID-19 Treatment Center.

Three of the 18 JTVCC inmates who tested positive were transferred in late September from out-of-state correctional facilities. These inmates received a COVID-19 test and tested negative before returning to Delaware, and were tested a second time in Delaware and tested negative while on a 14-day quarantine before entering the general prison population.

"Thanks to the vigilance of our security and medical teams we have identified a cluster of COVID-19 cases in one building at James T. Vaughn Correctional Center. We are acting aggressively through monitoring, testing, and treatment to contain these cases and eradicate the illness from this facility," **Commissioner Claire DeMatteis said.** "To date, DOC medical personnel have administered more than 5,700 COVID-19 tests among the inmate population, and we will continue to screen, quarantine, test, and treat inmates to mitigate the risks of this global pandemic."

On November 12 the [DOC temporarily suspended in-person visitation statewide as a precaution against COVID-19](#) as public health officials report rapidly increasing numbers of positive test results among the general public and indications of significant community spread of the disease.

Except for this new cluster of cases in one housing building at JTVCC there are no COVID-19 cases among inmates at the remaining eight DOC Level IV and Level V facilities. [Click HERE to review a current tracking chart of active inmate and staff COVID-19 cases and recoveries.](#)

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

The DOC continues to employ a variety of prevention, screening, cleaning and containment measures to guard against the introduction and spread of COVID-19, 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 time they are carefully monitored, including daily temperature checks with a thermometer.
- DOC has implemented extra daily cleanings 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.
- Face masks have been provided to every inmate at all Level V prisons and Level IV work release and violation of probation facilities statewide.
- Voluntary COVID-19 testing is being offered to all correctional staff and medical personnel at every DOC facility.

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.