

NEWS RELEASE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

Commissioner Claire DeMatteis

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As community spread increases across Delaware, DOC sees elevated numbers of COVID-19 cases

Dover, DE - The Delaware Department of Correction continues to take aggressive action to root out clusters of COVID-19 cases among inmates, just over a week after limited transmission of the illness was identified in multiple correctional facilities.

On November 16 the DOC announced that proactive screening measures and rapid COVID-19 testing identified a cluster of positive cases in one housing building at James T. Vaughn Correctional Center (JTVCC) in Smyrna. Days later, enhanced screening and testing identified the first inmate COVID-19 cases at Baylor Women's Correctional Institution (BWCI) in the eight months since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ongoing COVID-19 testing has revealed additional cases in four housing buildings at JTVCC and a cluster of cases at Howard R. Young Correctional Institution (HRYCI) in Wilmington.

"For the first time since COVID-19 reached Delaware, we have active inmate COVID cases at three separate facilities," **Commissioner Claire DeMatteis said.** "More than 86% of the inmates who have tested positive have no symptoms and those with symptoms are mild. We are staying ahead of these clusters by identifying them proactively, quarantining inmates in COVID treatment centers at JTVCC, HRYCI and BWCI, and providing quality care to get the individuals better."

Over the past ten days the DOC and its healthcare provider have administered 624 COVID-19 tests of inmates who have either exhibited COVID-like symptoms, have come into sustained contact with COVID-positive inmates, or are assigned to housing units where positive COVID-19 test results have been returned. **221 of these tests have been returned positive and more than 150 tests have been returned negative.** Inmate COVID-19 testing is ongoing, and approximately 250 inmate COVID-19 tests remain pending at this time, including 120 at HRYCI, 100 at JTVCC, and 30 at BWCI.

86% (191) of the inmates with active COVID-19 infection have no symptoms of illness and 14% (30) are exhibiting only minor symptoms. All but five of the inmates who tested positive are receiving round-the-clock treatment in DOC's COVID-19 Treatment Centers at JTVCC, HRYCI, and BWCI. Three COVID-positive inmates are being housed in the JTVCC infirmary for observation, one is being held in quarantine at HRYCI, and one with underlying health

conditions is receiving treatment in stable condition at an area hospital. None require supplemental oxygen.

More than 1,750 inmates across DOC facilities are receiving daily symptom checks by medical professionals, including temperature and pulse oxygen level checks, on top of existing prevention, screening, testing, and cleaning efforts.

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

Earlier this month as community spread outside DOC facilities intensified [DOC temporarily suspended in-person visitation](#) statewide on November 12 as a precaution against COVID-19 and temporarily suspended work release programs statewide on November 18 to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission from the community into DOC facilities.

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, including a [tracking chart of active inmate and staff cases](#), and read previous announcements of positive COVID-19 cases by visiting <https://doc.delaware.gov>, and follow *decorrection* on Facebook and Twitter.