

# NEWS RELEASE

## DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

### Commissioner Claire DeMatteis

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## DOC invests in new COVID-19 mitigation technology for building ventilation systems, as DOC vaccinations increase and inmate COVID-19 cases drop to 5 statewide

**Dover, DE** -- As the number of inmates with active COVID-19 infection drops to the single digits statewide and the number of individuals vaccinated by DOC approaches 1,000, the Delaware Department of Correction (DOC) continues to deploy new technology to support its comprehensive COVID-19 mitigation efforts.

Over the past week, crews have begun installing cutting-edge air quality improvement equipment designed to remediate against COVID-19 in Delaware's correctional facilities, starting at Howard R. Young Correctional Institution (HRYCI) in Wilmington. The *Eagle X Pro corona discharge system*, produced in the United States by a Nevada-based company, uses innovative technology to produce billions of positively and negatively charged oxygen ions, which are injected into a building's HVAC system and distributed throughout its indoor climate-controlled spaces. These charged ions combine with water molecules to create an airborne hydroperoxide compound that attacks any virus, bacteria, mold or other pathogen in the indoor space. Upon contact, a chemical reaction takes place that breaks down the structure of these pathogens and neutralizes them. This bi-polar ionization system has been demonstrated to eliminate 99% of pathogens and contaminants, including a new adaption to decontaminate for the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

"In mid-March as soon as the pandemic hit, DOC set all facility HVAC systems to circulate 100% outside air as part of our COVID-19 mitigation efforts," **said Department of Correction Commissioner Claire DeMatteis.** "When we learned of this new technology, we immediately pursued it and we are installing these new air purification systems in our facilities with urgency as an additional protection before any new strains of COVID-19 impact our correctional system. This technology, as part of our comprehensive COVID-19 mitigation strategy, will help keep our officers, staff, visitors, and inmates safe and help support our work to return to normal operations in the coming weeks."

The Delaware Department of Correction is the first American correctional system to employ this air purification technology by Eagle X Pro.

Eagle X Pro's corona discharge systems are being installed into the air supply ducts of prison HVAC systems, which are set to continuously circulate air to ensure a continuous flow of its virus-fighting ions throughout prison areas 24 hours a day. A DOC team reviewed several air purification systems and chose Eagle X Pro over alternatives, including UV Light systems that are more invasive to install in correctional settings and are effective only when UV light comes into direct line-of-sight with the pathogen for 8-10 seconds, rendering UV applications useless against air that is constantly in motion. Additionally, Eagle X Pro's system emits virtually no polluting ozone, in contrast to UV Light and other cleaning systems which produce ozone byproducts.

Eagle X Pro's corona discharge systems are being installed first across the entire HRYCI facility, select housing units at James T. Vaughn Correctional Center (JTVCC), and the Level IV Community Corrections Treatment Center in Smyrna with a \$200,000 grant of federal COVID-19 funding through the Delaware Criminal Justice Council. A subsequent installation phase is being planned which includes additional housing units at JTVCC and portions of Sussex Correctional Institution (SCI).

This investment comes on top of two recent enhancements to DOC's COVID-related screening and cleaning operations. In early January, **contactless wrist thermometer scanners** were deployed to every correctional facility. These body temperature scanners replace handheld forehead thermometers during the screening process that every person completes before entering a DOC facility or office. In addition, in January the DOC purchased and deployed more than a dozen **portable electrostatic decontaminating sprayers**. Unlike chemical mist fogging machines - which have been used by DOC since last spring and require treated spaces to be vacated for hours and vacuum sealed - these backpack electrostatic sprayers can be used to quickly and safely disinfect targeted areas, individual work spaces, and even one cell, without the need to empty and seal off that space.

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 temperature check.
- 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.
- Extra daily cleanings of DOC facilities are ongoing.
- 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.