

TO: ALL CONCERNED

DATE: February 17, 2021

RE: Town Hall Q & A

I will begin with a review of some of the stats at the facility. Of significance is that we currently have 367 recovered inmates here. Essentially this means that at one point they tested positive and now have antibodies from the COVID virus.

Though we are going in the right direction, to put things in perspective, we currently have 8 inmates out at the hospital with half of them being due to COVID related concerns. As explained at previous Town Halls, when an inmate needs more oxygen than we can provide at the facility, they must go to an outside hospital to receive.

Overall trends in the Department are in a positive direction concerning COVID, but there are still facilities with significant numbers. SCI Laurel Highlands began providing vaccines yesterday and a few other facilities are beginning them very soon. We have no official date of when we are receiving them yet at Albion, but we are prepared once we do.

From the inmate requests over the last week:

1. Can we get more oranges and fresh fruit for the vitamins they provide?

This is a good idea, although we provide what we are able to purchase through our menu set by Central Office.

2. Can you give us an update on beard trimmers and the Zyn tobacco free chew?

The beard trimmers were not supported by Central Office and the last word I had on Zyn is that there is still a supply issue.

3. Inmate Phones.

Due to the number of complaints and concerns regarding phones, I have assigned DSFM Jones as the point person locally. With many years as our Security Captain and now as a Deputy, he is well adept at the concerns surrounding phones and will be focused on any changes if they should need to occur.

4. Any updates on Sega's or any other games for in-cell?

We intend to get the handheld Sega's back out there as soon as feasible. We did hear last week that another facility in our region is being permitted to pilot another in-cell gaming system, so we will hopefully hear some good feedback on that soon.

5. Has the Department looked at other drugs for COVID such as Ivermesin?

I am sure the Pennsylvania Department of Health and our Medical experts at Central Office have considered all of the potential options out there in terms of COVID treatments. We locally have no option to go outside of what is directed by Central Office, but I trust that they looked at all options.

6. Can I refuse an assessment and a COVID test?

Yes, you may. The problem then becomes that we have no idea if you are positive or negative and therefore could be stuck in a quarantine for a longer amount of time. We also want to know if you are COVID positive because you also may start to experience symptoms which could be life-threatening. Please let us know.

7. Can you explain the extended quarantines?

We spend an extensive amount of time reviewing these quarantines when new cases pop up and some of you have had to live through that. At the end of the day, we are trying to ensure that we are mitigating the spread of COVID. We know that many humans will have very little to mild symptoms, but with some people it can be significant and deadly. If we are extending a quarantine, it is because we are concerned about a positive case potentially impacting other inmates.

8. There have been issues with us being able to add additional people on our phone lists.

These go through Ms. Reinhart at the facility and if there are significant issues we will address with her. Please push this up through your Unit Management Team.

9. Will there be a cost for the vaccine?

No. There will be no cost to you.

10. Once Visits start, will our families have to be vaccinated to come in? Will we have to be vaccinated to have a visit?

Though I have no idea when Visits could occur again, there is some discussion occurring at Central Office. I also do not know for certain what the requirements will be in terms of vaccination. I think it is safe to say you and your potential Visitor are in a much better position if you have been vaccinated once Visits occur again.

11. Why can C.I. inmates work together and some of us other inmates working in other areas can't?

Again, to mitigate interaction in larger groups. The direction from Central Office is to limit work. We must get Dietary Workers out to feed the 2200 inmates and 600 staff here and we must get inmates up to C.I. so that inmates in this region can get Commissary. Beyond that, we have been directed to limit inmates being together in larger groups until we are through the pandemic.

Some additional FAQs or "Frequently Asked Questions" came up this week regarding vaccines.

- Any issues taking the vaccine with my high blood pressure?

No, the vaccine is safe to take regardless of medical conditions. The only individuals who are advised against taking the vaccine are those with severe allergies to any of the vaccine's ingredients or who had a severe allergic reaction to the first shot

- If I have been positive, how long do I have to wait to receive the vaccine?

It is recommended you wait at least 10 days after diagnosis AND are symptom free for 3 days. UNLESS you were treated with monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma, then you must wait 90 days from their administration.

- I've recovered from the virus and now have antibodies, doesn't it help if I'm actually passing this on to others by NOT wearing my mask?

No, the antibodies are specific to you and your immune system. They cannot be passed to another individual via respiratory droplets as they are in your blood. Thus, it is of critical importance to continue hand washing and masking even if COVID recovered and/or vaccinated.

- If I've had other bad reactions to flu shots, should I be concerned about this vaccine?

No, "bad reactions" are often simply strong immune responses (which are a good thing). BUT, if you did have a severe (life-threatening) allergic reaction to a flu shot then you should discuss with your healthcare provider.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MRC', written in a cursive style.

Superintendent Clark

MRC/aae