

Special Fireside Chat

12/9/20

The COVID-19 pandemic has created new challenges, changes, adjustments, and inconveniences for all of us. We continue to battle this pandemic to mitigate the spread of the virus. Safety is our number one goal. The Department of Health and CDC have been instrumental in providing strategies, protocols, and techniques to help us overcome COVID-19. The Department of Health is now reporting that the state of Pennsylvania is now averaging nearly 10,000 new positive cases per day. Many of you have been hearing about the surge of COVID-19 from family, friends, and TV. Governor Wolf announced today that he, too, has tested positive for the virus.

Many prisons in the state of Pennsylvania have seen a dramatic increase in COVID-19 cases and resources have been deployed to those facilities to with the goal of a safe, secure environment.

Here at Huntingdon, we appreciate your efforts at reducing the spread by wearing your mask, washing your hands often, and by practicing social distancing. Whether a person is incarcerated or living in the community, patience, cooperation, and resiliency are major factors that move us forward in a productive way. We are confident we will win this battle against COVID-19.

With your overall safety in mind, the following changes will be implemented at SCI-Huntingdon with many of these changes also taking place at other state prisons. These changes are anticipated to be short term in order to get us through this second surge that Pennsylvania is currently witnessing. Again, these changes are being implemented with safety being the number 1 goal.

- There will be an emphasis on in cell programming with a focus on emotional growth, personal strength, healing, and inner peace. More information on this initiative will be coming.
- Yards, phones, kiosks, and showers will continue and be extended until 10:00 PM.

- Feeding will take place in your cell.
- Video visitations will continue.
- Cable will be free for the month of January.
- There will be no barber shop in the coming weeks.
- COVID-19 cleaning will continue throughout the prison.
- Medical staff will perform their duties on the tiers as they did so in the past.
- Inmate workers will continue to be paid whether they are pulled out for work or not. Workers being pulled will continue to be screened by getting their temperature taken.
- There will be 3 groups of kitchen workers pulled from CA Unit. 1 group will work on the left side of the dining hall, 1 group will work on the right side of the dining hall, and 1 group will work in the prep area.
- Cohort sizes will be reduced to 8 inmates during the current surge of COVID-19.

We would like to thank the inmate population for doing their part in this fight against COVID-19. We urge you to continue wearing your mask properly by covering your nose and mouth, washing your hands frequently, and practicing social distancing. This is not the time to become complacent in our battle against this virus.

We remain confident we will win this fight against COVID-19.

Thank you and stay safe.