

**TO: ALL CONCERNED**

**DATE: January 13, 2021**

**RE: Town Hall Q & A**

I had hoped to come into this week with better news, but that is not the case.

- Since January 1<sup>st</sup>, when we had no known cases in the inmate population, through some symptomatic inmates and contact tracing on multiple units, we now have 149 active positive cases. The vast majority are experiencing minor symptoms but there are those that as we know will be impacted worse.
- We currently have 3 inmates at the hospital COVID related and no deaths due to COVID as of today.
- We continue to have a large number of staff out under COVID related circumstances and that being said we are far from out of the woods on this situation.
- I was on the COVID Huddle this morning with all the facilities and we are among several other facilities still going through it. We have a plan to mitigate and manage here and that is what we will continue to do with all of your cooperation. I have said before that an analogy to me is it is much like a wildfire out West. They know they really can't put it all out, the whole goal is to manage it. That is what we need to do here with a strong focus on inmates that are medically compromised.
- You are seeing Unit Managers now coming around and taking your oxygen levels and temperatures. This is just an aid to Medical for the time being to get additional wellness checks done in the facility. If we find out someone has a low oxygen level or a high fever, Medical will be contacted.
- We have a very knowledgeable Medical Director here in Dr. Longnecker and he is well versed in COVID as he worked in a hospital prior to working here.
- As of this morning we did have approximately 12 Pods on some type of enhanced quarantine and we are beginning to get some off quarantine effective today. Several will come off next week. I understand that this is very uncomfortable being on these enhanced quarantines but it is the standard across the Department on how to handle this virus and mitigate spread.
- Our ultimate goal in the PA Department of Corrections is to prevent inmate deaths and we will do everything we can do to keep that from happening.

Some Agenda items from you this week and requests:

1. Some other suggestions for fundraisers were provided to the Activities Department such as boxer shorts and thermals.
2. Why can't indigent inmates get more free stuff?

We do consider indigent inmates when we do the give-a-ways for the entire population. We know that some inmates here have money to buy items and some don't, so we always consider that.

### 3. **Phones**

The phones should now be allowing 3 phone calls and not the single attempt that was happening last week. The sole reason we changed the controls on these phones is that there are inmates that monopolize phone time and it prevents everyone in their Cohort from getting a phone call. Beyond that we really wouldn't care if it was handled equitably, but unfortunately it is not. For this reason, we do put some controls in. These should be corrected though, by now.

4. When we get to the "new norm" will inmates have to move for jobs?

That is yet to be seen in all cases but one thing this pandemic has shown us is that there is some advantage to this stance. If we have inmates spread across the facility and another pandemic down the road comes through, it potentially can spread to the entire institution, and also leave work areas without workers. We are not sure what this will look like ultimately though.

### 5. "Viral Load"

I mentioned some months ago about viral load analysis that is going on at facilities. An inmate had heard of it recently again and asked me about it. This is actual testing that is done with our waste through the sewer at the facility. It assesses in simple terms the amount of COVID in waste. As it goes up you can see that there is more of the virus in the facility, as it goes down it is the opposite. It is just one more tool to find out how much of the virus is in a particular facility. Ours is as of this week at medium and it has been in the last 3 months everywhere from low up to as high as medium.

6. Will we be able to take our Tablets to the Rec Center?

Frankly, we can't wait until we can start using things like the Rec Center and that is something we have yet to consider. You will have to stand by on that decision.

7. Is Dietary food safe from getting COVID?

I can tell you that I eat in the Dietary Department 5 days a week. I know of no cases of anyone across the Department contracting COVID from eating food from a Dietary Department. As I have stated from Day 1, wash your hands prior to eating, that is common sense everywhere and anywhere in the world and has now just become an absolute necessity.

8. No news as of today on Tablets, TVs or typewriters going on sale.

It is well known that these are requested but the Vendors are a hold up on all of these.

9. "This enhanced quarantine process is not fair."

My comment to that is that we could say that none of what has happened to the world in the last 10 months is fair, although it is reality. In my lifetime I have never experienced anything like this epidemic and though we will get through it, it is certainly not fair that families cannot see their loved ones, elderly cannot see their children and that inmates here are in their cells as much time as they are a day currently. None of this we would say is fair but unfortunately is necessity until we get on the other side of this epidemic.

10. Vaccines

I have no new news on the vaccines other than we will be strongly encouraging that everyone takes them. There is much debate on when and where these will start but as of this morning, I have no updates to provide.

Thanks again for your cooperation and I will update you next week or earlier if need be.



Superintendent Clark

MRCaae