

# Local Family Council COVID-19 Teleconference Notes

## Stafford Creek Corrections Center

May 6, 2020 3:00 p.m.

**Facilitator:** CPM Rob Schreiber for Gina Penrose, Associate Superintendent of Programs

**Attendance:** SCCC Staff: CPM Secy. Sr. M. Rehak, CPM Secy. Sr. D. Myers, Security Sp. Mitch Bolden

HQ: P. Perkinson OCO: J. Carns & M. Gyde Family Services - C. Melhuish

LFC family officers: Family State Rep S. Cooksey, Family Co-Chair M. Fry, Health Svc V. Westman

LFC family members: D. Sifres, J. Triggs, L. Taylor, S. Hitchcock, B. Duschene, V. Clark, J. Griggs, K. Stuart Stevenson, J. Revay, E. Broussard

**Purpose** – To obtain information related to the COVID 19 outbreak and send to the families to help them understand the steps being taken by DOC to keep the Incarcerated Individuals safe and healthy.

**Approval of 4-29-20 Minutes** – Minutes were approved by LFC officers & family members.

### **UPDATES:**

**Quarantine status** – We have 6 incarcerated individuals currently in isolation/quarantine status.

**Mask updates by Captain Mainio** – In reference to COVID-19 Tier Rep questions relating to clarification on mandatory requirements of wearing mandatory masks, the below is a summary provided by Captain Mainio. This information was included in our 4-28-20 COVID-19 Tier Rep Meeting Minutes with copies for each Tier Rep and posting in all units.

Per Captain Mainio – The directive from HQ is to cover the nose and mouth with the face covering. It is mandatory anytime outside of the cell when indoors. Obviously one cannot wear the face covering while actually showering or brushing teeth; however the covering must be worn to and from the bathroom. Incarcerated not wanting to take their covering into the shower, should consider making an effort to cover their nose/mouth by using their shower towel, wash cloth, etc. Initially it was asked of the population to make an effort to either wear the mask or some sort of covering over the nose/mouth. However, as we progress forward during COVID-19 in an effort to normalize face coverings, the expectations of the incarcerated will be increased to include proper wearing and fully covering nose/mouth. We're locally making face coverings for the incarceration that are better fitting and a bit more practical for all day wear. We've started issuing these in H6 and will move onto the other units as we have the supply. As supply and options become more available, we may clarify what is

acceptable and what is not. Incarcerated should not be infracted if they are making an effort and responding appropriately to reminders and corrective action by staff. However the requirement to properly wear a face covering while outside the cell is mandatory. This includes while on phones and JPay.

Comment: One incarcerated individual had an issue in the unit using a towel going to and from the restroom.

Reply: The expectations for the use of masks and/or face coverings has been posted in the units and we continue to encourage staff to use their discretion while patiently reminding the population.

#### **Updates to previous questions:**

1. Q: Family Friendly Events: Can former events that were cancelled be rescheduled (i.e. Significant Women's Event & Dude's Day)? Will the Summer events take place?

A: It is unknown at this time if former events will be rescheduled. We remain under the Governor's "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" directive. Last week, the Governor outlined a phased plan to reopen group activities throughout the state. It is unclear at this point which phase would allow visitation to re-open, and it is not until Phase 3 that allows gatherings of up to 50 people. As soon as we receive permission from HQ, we will do so according to the instructions provided with that permission.

A: Response from Ms. Gamroth: A modified summer field event will take place, but will not be a BBQ meal as in the past. All participants will receive a "goody bag" on their way back to their units. There is no roll out date determined yet; weather will also be a factor. More information will be forthcoming.

Comment: The OBF funds slated for family friendly events might be lost if the event is not rescheduled. Could the funds be used for a weekly incentive like passing out ice cream to the incarcerated?

Reply: CPM Schreiber will pass this suggestion along to DOC HQ for response.

2. Q: Stimulus checks for the incarcerated: What is the protocol for incarcerated individuals receiving stimulus checks? The families of those incarcerated will need this information to move forward.

A: Response from Michael Gleason, I3 in IIU: We have reached out to the IRS for a specific reply. When we have a response, we will share that information with you.

Comment from LFC Family Rep. Loren Taylor: If the incarcerated individual has a tax return with married and filing jointly, or retirement that is taxed, they must have an outside account.

**UPDATE 5/07/2020 forwarded by Michael Gleason, IIU (links embedded):**

**Stimulus payments made to those behind bars should be returned, IRS says**

[NEWS](#)

**by: Nexstar Media Wire**

**Posted: May 7, 2020 / 10:03 AM CDT / Updated: May 7, 2020 / 10:03 AM CDT**

WASHINGTON, DC ([WBTW](#)) – The Internal Revenue Service says any stimulus payments made to those incarcerated should be returned.

The IRS added a question and answer section regarding stimulus payments and those incarcerated to its Economic Impact Payment Information Center [website](#) on Wednesday.

The question, which is number 12 on the website, asks, “Does someone who is incarcerated qualify for the payment?”

“No. A Payment made to someone who is incarcerated should be returned to the IRS by following the [instructions about repayments](#),” the IRS answered.

If a payment is based on a joint return, only the portion of the payment made for the incarcerated spouse must be returned, the IRS said.

“This amount will be \$1,200 unless adjusted gross income exceeded \$150,000,” the IRS said.

The IRS has also said stimulus [payments made to people who have died](#) should be returned.

3. Q: Status update on EFV’s.

A: Per CPM Bohon’s Secretary Ms. Myers, HQ staff have been reassigned to other areas during COVID-19 and will begin reviewing EFV applications in June. When HQ gives the directive to begin rescheduling, Myers will contact the first ones cancelled to schedule new dates.

**Questions/Answers forwarded for this week’s meeting:**

1. Q: In H5A, all the ID badges are placed together for store call out. Would it be possible to just call the inmates alphabetically until this pandemic is over?

A: CPM Schreiber and Captain Mainio observed the stores process in H5, which is working well. They were called alphabetically and practicing social distancing. Another unit is using a system which does not require touching the ID’s. This is something that will be discussed further at the CUS/CPM meeting to share successful ideas.

2. Q: Since lunch is now a boat, there are no longer vegetables provided. I was told that the guidelines for the standard diet are vegetables twice per day. I wonder if the kitchen crew could cut up fresh vegetables that the guys could take at breakfast if they wanted them for later? I hear that the kitchen crew are looking for tasks to fill their shifts. Maybe this could be a solution in multiple ways. Less starch and more vegetables would help keep the inmates healthier.

A: Per Food Svc Manager Attard, this request will not be granted as lunch boats come fully packaged from C.I.

Comment: This is not a good option for diabetics and sometimes the incarcerated chooses to forego the boat in favor of their own peanut butter or other option at the expense of the family member.

Reply: CPM Schreiber will continue working with FSM Attard to explore more diabetic options.

3. Q: The guards seem to be doing a much better job of wearing their masks than the inmates. Just like all rules, shouldn't this one be enforced by the guards? Wear them or be issued an infraction. The guards are great about reminding the guys to practice the six foot rule, and could add the mask call out as well.

A: CPM Schreiber is seeing the officers addressing this in a considerate and pro-social manner. Communication from Julie Martin, DOC Deputy Secretary: In closed areas such as dayrooms, the face covering should be worn at all times. There are instances when thoughtful discretion is advised. As long as social distancing is maintained, it is appropriate to allow someone some leeway. When social distancing is not maintained, reminders as opposed to punitive actions should be the primary response. The individual should first be given a verbal warning to correct the behavior, with a Behavior Observation Entry (BOE) entered into OMNI.

4. Q: The cleaning crews need to be changing the water in their mop buckets frequently. I hear that more mop heads need to be available also. Cleaning is so very important during this pandemic.

A: Response from Dave Jennings, CIS2 Laundry: An additional pallet of mop heads was ordered and received. Unit staff ensure that adequate supplies are available for use and monitor the thoroughness of the cleaning. CPM Schreiber and Captain Mainio have noted on walk-throughs that all the units consistently smell clean and they always see cleaning tasks going on all throughout the day.

5. Q: I continue to hear that staff are allowed to chew and spit tobacco. I cannot imagine that this practice would be acceptable. Please advise.

A: Per DOC Policy, employees are permitted to use chewing tobacco inside and there are also rules for containment and disposal such as spitting into a water bottle with a lid

that will be carried out with them. CPM Schreiber will ask the Captain to send out another reminder to staff on those rules.

6. Q: I have a quick question for all of you. I don't know if it is just me and my account or if there are other issues, but for the past three days I have attempted to put funds on my prepaid and my son's pin phone accounts. Connect Network keeps rejecting my transaction. I called my bank to make sure it wasn't them doing something. They see each time I attempt to make the payment as approved and then immediately reversed by consumer. Are others having issues?

A: Response from Michael Gleason , I3 in IIU: GTL/Connect Network does not accept pre-paid cards. It has to be an actual debit/credit card. Please call GTL **customer service number at 877-650-4249**.

7. Q: Issues with inmate phones in H4 B side. Calls not connecting, delayed responses. Service order needs to come from staff at SCCC.

A: LFC COVID-19 Teleconference 4-29-20 response (provided by Mike Gleason, I3 in IIU): We are not aware of any issues with dropped calls, however, we can't account for outside cellular dropped calls. Any incarcerated individual who has a recurrent problem can report an issue directly to the "Inmate KITE Line" at 360-555-1212 free of charge. They can also send a Kiosk message to IIU and we will check it, or forward to the GTL rep for review. They should also report the time, date and the number called. This is the same number that is posted in the units and has been available for incarcerated use for years.

8. Q – part 1: How many Covid-19 tests have been given to inmates? To-date, how many inmates put into isolation, quarantine? How many have tested positive? How many tests not processed?

Q – part 2: As of May 4, 2020, 340 inmates have been tested out of a state population of 16,596 (DOC's analytics for March 2020). How many have been tested at SCCC? More and more prisons across the country are moving to mass testing beyond those that are symptomatic and discovering the numbers testing positive have jumped alarmingly. Those that are asymptomatic can still transmit the disease. When will there be more universal testing at SCCC? As of May 4, 2020, 78 in the state population are in isolation and 1,109 are in quarantine. How many in isolation or quarantine at SCCC?

A: CPM Schreiber does not have exact information on the total number of tests issued at SCCC. Response from Keith Parris, HCM2: All incarcerated individuals at SCCC who have been tested have had negative results. There are currently 3 individuals in isolation and 3 in quarantine. We are waiting results for a few recent tests. As to testing protocol, we are following the guidelines from headquarters for testing symptomatic patients. If headquarters changes the criteria to voluntary testing, we will communicate that to the population accordingly, but there is no indication the guidelines will change.

9. Q: Have classes resumed?

A: Response from Jayme Peterson, Dean for Education, GHC: Spring quarter is now underway. Students in Human Services, Sociology, and Business will be on a callout this Friday, May 1st to synch laptops in P-building. ELA students will also be on a callout to drop off completed work in their workbooks. Students should continue using the kiosk system for communicating with their instructors and education staff in general. We are hoping to begin face-to-face instruction with social distancing soon, stay tuned for more information. Education staff will be here periodically; many are working remotely but can still answer kiosk messages. Let us know if you are having issues with laptops or anything else regarding your educational programming, we are here to help students be successful!

10. Q: As of May 1, 2020 (per the Governor's order), 538 inmates have been released throughout the state by commutation or rapid re-entry and 62 furloughed from work release to reduce population and spread of the disease. At SCCC, DOC records the average daily population in March 2020 as 1,976 with a capacity of 1,970. How many were released from SCCC which, as of March, was just over capacity?

A: To date, 18 individuals at SCCC met all of the criteria for commutation and also 4 individuals were granted rapid re-entry. We expect more to be released on Saturday, pending HQ approval.

### **Roundtable discussion:**

1. CPM Schreiber read the JPay update from the 5/05/20 COVID-19 Tier Reps meeting:

**JPay video visits** – DOC is in daily contact with JPay, who have been made aware of all reported issues within the facility and are working on resolutions. Ms. Myers, CPM Bohon's Secretary, reviewed 5 days' worth of JPay video calls to include documentation of each call date, time & length of call with screen shots and detailed information as to what issues were being encountered. This information was then logged onto a spreadsheet and sent to JPay with confirmation that the information had been received and JPay was looking into the issues. SCCC will continue to press for answers/solutions with JPay and Ms. Myers will continue to review the video calls and assist with troubleshooting efforts. CPM Bohon believes JPay's infrastructure was not set up to handle the additional bandwidth of all day usage due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Q: Could the Betterment Funds be used to service the phone lines to improve bandwidth, since they haven't been updated since the facility was built in 2000?

A: It was suggested that this be discussed on a conference call with Ombuds on Thursday. This has been an on-going discussion for over ten years.

2. CPM Schreiber thanked Ms. Cooksey for the late email request to address a rumor stating that a COVID-19 infecting individual was transferred from Monroe to SCCC for isolation. That rumor is false. No one from Monroe has been transferred here. SCCC received an incarcerated individual on Tuesday from Cedar Creek to be evaluated and placed in G-unit isolation. This is because our Medical doctor also oversees Cedar Creek. Both the individual and the transport staff were in full PPE and followed COVID-19 protocol.

Q: If an incarcerated individual tests positive for COVID-19, instead of transferring them to another facility for isolation, could they go to Maple Lane?

A: No, Maple Lane is not equipped to house incarcerated individuals. The pharmacy was moved there from Shelton, which is the closest medical facility, but they have limited medical staff at Shelton.

3. Q: Some individuals in H2 are not able to access the JPay movie and e-book library. Is this a facility-wide issue?

A: This will be brought up at our daily COVID-19 Tier Rep Meeting and response will be provided during next week's LFC COVID-19 teleconference call.

Comment: Thank you to all the staff for holding the daily Tier Reps meetings. The efforts to communicate and the professionalism shown is appreciated.

4. Q: How many isolation and quarantine beds are there in relation to how many beds are in G unit? Why was this unit chosen for ISO/Q?

A: There are 272 beds in G unit; 136 per pod with 68 on each top tier and 68 on each bottom tier. We are using the A side bottom tier in G unit for ISO/Q because the doors have cuff ports that can be used for things such as passing food which protects staff from excessive exposure. G unit is our designated unit for iso/quarantine because they are wet cells, meaning they have sinks & toilets. There are 27 cells designated for ISO/Q use, and there are no plans to fill them all.

5. Q: Are you aware that some incarcerated individuals do not report their symptoms in order to avoid going to isolation/quarantine?

A: Yes, it does happen. Some choose to self-quarantine in their cell for a few days and not report it. To help protect the population, anyone who is seen in Medical for any reason automatically gets a temperature check. We also encourage the population to protect themselves and others by reporting others who are not feeling well.

Comment from Ms. Cooksey: She thanked CPM Schreiber for accepting the last minute topic and for taking the time to address all of the questions submitted this week. She also reminded the family members to filter all proposed questions through her email.

CPM Schreiber commented that SCCC staff continues to work diligently to resolve the frustrating phone and JPay issues. He apologized again for the late start on today's call due to new processes with our equipment in facilitating the calls.