Local Family Council COVID-19 Informational Call Notes

Call Details
Facility: WCC/ Microsoft TEAMS
Date and Time: 6/11/2022 10:00-11:00 AM

Attendees
- Melinda Kupers, Jay Jackson, and Jennifer Allmendinger
- Carol Welch, Curt Schindler, Felix D’Allesandro, Wendy Schindler, Tasha Frazier, and Helen Russell

Suggestions and Update
- Getting the word out about LFC. Great ideas and we can get them placed in the Visit Room
  - Sign-Up Sheets
  - Flyers
  - Posters

Pre-Submitted Questions

Question 1
Please present the process to apply for and receive travel and Lodging vouchers to attend a visiting session here at WCC. These funds are identified in the IIBF Family Friendly budget.

Answer
The information for the program can be found on the DOC website under visiting.
https://www.doc.wa.gov/corrections/incarceration/visiting/support.htm#lodging. I believe the directions are very clear and family should be able to follow them.

In regard to the LAP Program, they can stay at any hotel they like, they should fill out an application in advance. The application link is here; https://doc.wa.gov/corrections/incarceration/visiting/docs/lodging-assistance-program-application.pdf. The bottom of the application has the email address to send the application.

Once they complete their stay, they will need to send a copy of the paid invoice to this email; DOCHQLAP@DOC1.WA.GOV

To qualify, anyone who is an approved visitor and traveling over 150 miles (one way) with an address current with the visitation program, should be approved.

I hope this helps, if anyone has any questions they can email the FSU directly at: docfamilyservicesunit@doc1.wa.gov

Question 2
Please explain your process for processing legal mail. Appellate tells us that my son’s petition to the court has been dismissed because he did not respond to mail from the court. Several requests from the court did not make it through the process. It was only when the superintendent’s admin delivered the envelope to my son that he found out that he had forfeited his appeal due to lack of response. The mail from the courts may have come in while he was in medical quarantine. We are trying to straighten this out and are asking Division II to resend and give him a chance.
Answer
When Legal mail is received it must be from a legal entity, courts, attorneys, etc. It must be clearly marked “Legal Mail” on the outside of the envelope. Legal Mail from friends and family that is marked as Legal Mail will not be accepted as such, as they are not a legal entity. Legal Mail is entered into the FPU software, and a signature log is generated. The Legal Mail is delivered to the recipient by the Legal Mail Officer and the recipient signs the signature log. The Officer opens the mail in front of the recipient and hands it to them. The exception to this is those housed in the RDC who are not permitted by Policy 590.500 to retain their Legal Mail. After an RDC recipient reads the mail it is taken back and placed in his Legal Mail file located in C Bldg. this will follow him to his Parent facility.

Question 3
What is the status of programming and education opportunities?

Answer
Education is getting ready to start the summer quarter which starts July 5th. We are hoping the floors on the 2nd floor will be completed. They are looking forward to start having classes again.

Question 4
My son has not been able to gain access to the law library. He says that access is not available to those in the Evergreen unit. He has the need to e-file with the Appellate court but cannot gain access to the LL to do so. He has sent his appeal snail mail, but time and deadlines are quickly upon him. This situation may cost him his chance to be heard and possibly re-sentenced.

Answer
Response from Law Librarian John Thompson –
Law library time was impacted by quarantine. Individuals needed to send kites so that the Legal Librarian could respond. All TC units currently have time in the law library and sign-up sheets are in the units.

When Evergreen was under quarantine I sent requests to the unit. I handled e file and notary in the unit. Evergreen is now off quarantine and offenders wishing to visit the law library should sign up in their unit. Those lists are sent to me, and I place them on the callout.

Question 5
Recently, one of the SFC members used public disclosure to identify reported cases of TB. The report found WCC with 60 latent cases. Why has this situation not been spoken of and how is WCC addressing cases of TB?

Answer:
Response from Dr. Rodakowski –
Even if we had identified 60 latent TB cases (LTBI) here at WCC, it would not be anything newsworthy. It is not infectious, and people with LTBI do not pose a danger to others. Most people with LTBI live for decades without knowing they have it and without symptoms. We would expect to have people with LTBI identified at WCC because we are the reception center. Everyone that comes through is screened for tuberculosis. People in prison are more likely to have tuberculosis than the general population so it is not unexpected that we regularly find people with LTBI when they first arrive. I am not sure where the number 60 came from. I just checked, and since the beginning of the year we have identified about 40 people with LTBI. Most of those have moved on, as our population is constantly arriving and then being transferred to their permanent facilities. The reason the number
of LTBI cases has not been talked about is because this is routine for us, and WCC has not seen any significant increase in the number of people with LTBI.

We have been following CDC guidelines as far as screening new arrivals, and it is considered part of our job to check for it. The entire incarcerated population is also screened for tuberculosis once a year. Some individuals refuse to be tested when they are called up. LTBI can turn into active TB and that puts the sick person at risk as well as those living and working around them.

I would hope that the family members would encourage their loved ones to get screened once a year, and if they are found to have LTBI, to be treated. The treatment is several months of antibiotics. If they don’t get treated and their immune system becomes weak, they are likely to develop active tuberculosis. That is much harder to treat requiring at least 6 months of several strong antibiotics and several months of being in respiratory isolation in the infirmary.

** WCC will have a COVID vaccine clinic on June 13 & 14

Question 6
I am concerned with the constantly rising prices in commissary and store. Knowing that this is an issue that goes beyond the local prison, I would like to get local feedback to inform my questioning at the state level. The issue is, “Are our LO being fairly compensated for their daily labor?” Department policy 700.100 states that the Secretary has the ability to set the hourly rate for class III workers. It does not require a legislative act.

Answer
The Secretary sets the pay. I have seen nothing from the Secretary on this issue. This is a statewide issue and not something that can be taken care of at the facility level. The question can be raised, but we can’t change the pay.

Question 7
At the state level, the IIBF budget for FY23 is now being built. Is budget building happening here at WCC? How might families be informed of local budget planning for the year starting July 1, 2022? Line items of interest include Family Friendly activities and services, TV channel selection, EFV maintenance and upgrades, recreation, and non-restrictive spending.

Answer
The Family Friendly budget comes out of Headquarters (HQ). The CPPC submits their events to HQ and it is reviewed.

Regarding TV lineups – Maintenance Facility Manager, Andy Williams, is working with Hood Canal Communications. We are having challenges. Williams has requested that Hood Canal come out and do some assessments.

Regarding Non-Restrictive Spending – HQ will be putting something out later this month or July. They will talk about moving more money to Religious and Cultural events. When HQ says we have X amount of money, then we can spend it. We can move money around. There is other money that may be available for next year also.

Question 8
Are there any plans to change the cohort groups necessitating moving and changing cellmates? If yes, what is the reasoning?
We are still planning to change R6 to Pine Hall. This will be our only re-entry unit for those 18 months or less. There is currently no opening dated, but we are moving forward. This will be our 3rd TC unit to supply workers. We are struggling with our two largest work areas. Currently Cedar supplies our CI workers and Evergreen our Maintenance workers. We scrambled to get Evergreen to work in CI during this last outbreak. This caused an uproar within the unit. Some liked working in CI as long as there was space. Having the units split up CI between 2 units was not popular. CPM will talk to them herself if a decision is made should it happen again.

Question 9
How does the mailroom decide which pdf files are allowed? There is inconsistency and some clarification would be appreciated.

Answer
Response from Mailroom Sgt. Edgington –
We do not decide what PDF info is given to an incarcerate. The rules that apply to this is in 450.100, the copied material cannot be copied book pages, cannot be copyrighted material either. Those housed in the RDC are not permitted to receive copies or photocopies from any source, they are only allowed to receive correspondence. Hope this answers the questions.

Additional Questions

Question 1
Is there work being done in visiting? How is that coming along?

Answer
They were pouring concrete last week. The target date is in August for the patio and outside seating area. We were given money for this special project. There will be 4 concrete pours, furniture, and grass. The money has to be spent by June 30th.

Question 2
Is there a date for opening up the child area?

Answer
We had a meeting last week and there is nothing new for the child area or vending machines. We are doing some analyzing to increase visiting and get more for Cedar and Evergreen. The question to increase the time from 3 to 5 hours was asked and the answer was “No”. We are not allowed to increase the number of visitors and can’t extend past 3 hours. The data is still being looked at.

Question 3
How long does it take to get approved for an EFV?

Answer
It depends on when all the documents get received. The counselors have 10 days to gather all the documents and send to HQ. HQ meets once a month to go over EFV applications.

Comments/Closing
  - EFV furniture has arrived. Both units now have a head and footboard for the queen and twin beds. There is a nightstand, coffee table and 4 chairs and table for each unit. The air fryers have also arrived. We
have unrestricted funds for the EFV units so there is more shopping to be done to get the finishing
touches like more lamps and some wall hangings.

- There is a suggestion to leave instructions on how to use the air fryers.
- We have not been able to resolve the gaming system issue because of our internet capabilities.

Thank you everyone for coming to the meeting and thank you for your great suggestions.