

WSP LFC COVID-19 Teleconference Notes

Date 4/28/2020 Time 2:00 p.m.

Meeting Attendees

Department/Facility Co-Chair: Steve Barker

LFC Co-Chair: Anna Ivanov

Secretary LFC: Susan Wade, taking notes

Members Present: - Wendy Dubinsky, Dean Dubinsky

OCO and DOC HQ: Caitlin Robertson (OCO), Rob Jackson, Melissa Hutcherson

The following questions were addressed:

- **Please provide the most up to date stats on what's below and tell us more about one staff member testing positive and how it affected the prison operations?**

- # of men in quarantine -5
- # of men in isolation - 6
- # of men tested including results – 69 tested/ all negative
- # of staff currently screened out – 56
- # of staff tested positive – 2 Medical Staff have tested positive.

Staff stated that they spoke with the Medical Director in the am before call and these were the stats given. An inquiry from family: Staff was asked about William Unit and the presence of quarantined men in the unit, adding this person also works on the food line – in pantry. No knowledge of specifics by staff.

- **Hand sanitizer update - in which areas is it available?**

The hand sanitizer was a problem for most if not all facilities, WSP included. The 65 stations that were to be installed is now on hold and there are three stations available for hand sanitizer for the incarcerated. 3- Tower Gate (/), East Complex – in the Clean Room, general area. It will be available in areas that soap and water is not. An inquiry by family, staff was asked if possible, to introduce more safely, perhaps individual containers. This will increase unintended use and the potential selling of it among the incarcerated. Staff is continuing to come up with ideas and access to sinks for washing is being allowed if requested.

- **Face coverings/masks and coffee filter update. How do you ensure staff is encouraging the incarcerated to wear them as opposed to taking punitive actions?**

Staff is encouraging and educating the incarcerated in the use of the mask, no punitive actions have been taken at this time to their knowledge. Staff was walking around and found only one man that was not wearing the mask. It was discussed and it was left in cell, he forgot it and went and retrieved it. The facility Captains statewide are gathering and discussing how to handle and the approach that should be taken as to continue educating everyone. Education is key for safety for all, the social distancing factor, the wearing of face coverings and washing of the hands. Staff has received 200 additional masks and additional 5000 coffee filters. The incarcerated will be able to exchange the used filters and exchange for new ones upon request. Additionally, 100-150 additional hair ties have been purchased. There is concern over the CI and kitchen staff masks and the need for masks that are more comfortable, less cumbersome and are better suited for work. Also, SPL has made 500 masks that will remain in the work areas of the kitchen, staff will have to secure and manage the distribution. A family member voiced concern over the yard and

use of masks. Herzogs memo stated masks are not necessary in the yard and that no punitive actions will be taken. Again, staff reiterated that no infractions had been given to their knowledge. It was asked if staff in booths should be wearing the masks since it is an action that is mandatory – staff responded with “if there are more than 2 people and they are not social distancing themselves then they must wear it -but if alone in the booth or social distancing is being used, then no they are not required to”. There are 1100+ employees working in the facility and they are all required to wear some kind of face mask.

- **Fundraisers - can anything be done to boost morale? It's been done at least one other facility with very positive results.**

Staff continues to look into options to boost morale. Staff recently purchased \$900 worth of popcorn and bags for the incarcerated. Superintendents are working together to find ways to boost morale. It was mentioned another facility was able to do a fundraiser and the proceeds went to the local food bank.

- **Why are not all medical personnel wearing protective masks when they hand out medications to inmates, some are so close to the meds that their breath could touch the medications.**

The medical director was made aware of the issue and it was addressed with the individual this morning.

- **Robert Needham #370086 practices the Muslim faith and Ramadan has begun. He filled out his forms to get the meals required to observe Ramadan, but there has been a paperwork mistake and he is not receiving meals. Can you help?**

Chaplain confirmed that as of Friday this individual was added to the special diet list

- **Are transfers still continuing from Monroe and Shelton to WSP? And are those qualifying for transfers being transferred?**

Yes, transfers are continuing as directed, they are only Special Transports, to assist other facilities with social distancing. Regular transfers have been reduced at this time, but received transfers from Shelton on Monday, April 27th. WSP received 10 new transfers from Monroe, Saturday April 25th and 40 IMU to IMU transfers from Monroe as well on Monday, April 27th per staff. As we all know Monroe has been impacted the hardest. Transfers are being screened at departure site and screened again when they arrive off bus. Family member mentioned hearing that an arrival to WSP from Shelton was immediately given a mask from WSP staff. Question – why would they not be wearing masks on the bus? Staff stated they would place extra masks on buses to aid with this. Staff was asked if qualifying level transfers are happening. Assistant Superintendent Barker stated he oversees the records department and custody level transfers are going to happen, it is being monitored.

- **There are no paper towels in Victor unit. The officers are telling the incarcerated that it's too expensive. Will the paper towels be replenished?**

Staff stated that the paper towel issue had been corrected, refills were replenished. It turns out they were being set out not placed into the dispensers and they were being scooped up.

- **Is it possible to air dayrooms to bring fresh air in? People are saying it is too stuffy and they don't get any fresh air inside the units at all.**

Units DEFGVW doors open to the outside, there is flow through as they are coming in and out. BAR unit might be stuffy, they do not have doors that open to the outside. Units 6,8,10 have free flowing air by doors being opened. Family inquired if doors could be opened to allow fresh air while the incarcerated are in their cells? The 6 newer units are designed to not have doors open, it provides for balancing of the HVAC units and the efficient flowing of air. Staff concurred they are not HVAC guys, but this is what they were told. Family inquired as if this could be looked into further – inquiring if there were specialist on site? Yes, HVAC personnel are on staff.

- **The 2 bars of soap that were distributed a few days ago are not antibacterial. Are you aware of this? Who can we escalate this to?**

The soap received this time was not antibacterial like the first round of dispersed soaps. Bacterial soap kills bacteria not virus. So the continued washing hands with soap and water is always the best option to reduce risks.

ROUNDTABLE COMMENTS:

WSP leadership continues to share and educate the staff and the incarcerated during these times, they have added relevant COVID information to the Channel 12 – WSP internal, as well as “infomercials” if you will, to Channel 13 – the movie channel so in between they can have opportunity here as well to be updated.

There have not been any religious activities in 7 weeks and the Chaplain is developing videos in conjunction with the different religions that will be aired on Channel 12 for viewing. They will publish the times for the different practicing faiths.

Staff confirmed two medical staff had tested positive for the virus. They have quarantined some individuals that had potential contact with the staff.

The reinstatement of visitation was brought up, as to when they may see this happening. Staff stated that conversations are being had - they are in the “infant” stage of conversations with Sgt. Beal. The schedule that was initiated for 2020 is what they plan to use, not sure how it will work, 1st come 1st serve basis or what - too early to determine. Visiting will certainly look different and no “hard” date has been offered. The country is loosening up and that helps. As for EFV’s - it is the same conversation, family asked that since there are 4 units perhaps this is the opportunity to develop the use of all four units to expand the use and add additional opportunities for families to participate more frequently since the number of eligible participants is on the rise. Staff said there are reasons they do not use them – but those reasons were not given. Hopeful, this time might give staff opportunity to consider the needs and see what can be done to secure and alter current units to allow for optimum use.

Discussion early on regarding the conference call fail that was set up for Monday - and the fail of this call. Anna was able to set up a call using her available source. It was stated DOC HQ cancelled all conference calls due to being compromised. It was agreed we would maintain bi-weekly calls at this time, due to information may be redundant if weekly. This may change if needed.

Call was ended and everyone thanked for participating.