

# Local Family Council COVID-19 Informational Call Notes

## Call Details

**Facility:** WSP / Teleconference

**Date and Time:** 7/27/2021, 1:00PM

## Attendees

- Don Holbrook, Superintendent; Steve Barker, Associate Superintendent; Rob Jackson, Associate Superintendent; Bill Copland, Family Services; Sgt. Rocky Beal; Caitlin Robertson, OCO; Stella Spracklin, OCO; Wendy Dubinsky, SFC Rep; Tina Wright, LFC Rep; Francis Storandt, LFC Secretary; Dean Dubinsky, Steven Kugler; Karen Cain & Debra Gilbreth, CPPC & Scribe

## Weekly COVID Update: Superintendent Holbrook, Associate Superintendents Barker & Jackson

WSP is officially on "Cluster Status". Cluster Status is defined as a group of confirmed cases of COVID-19 that only involves staff and/or volunteers.

### Questions:

- **Is it true several staff members have tested positive?**

Yes, it is true. The staff with positive COVID results were from different areas of the facility and not from one specific area, that is why we are on cluster status.

- **Is this weekend's mass testing associated with the outbreak among staff?**

The facility status change is what prompted WSP to test all incarcerated individuals who were willing to be tested over the weekend. Testing has been completed and will be sent out 7/28/2021. Results should come back in the next few days.

Information about WSP COVID-19 within the prison can be found on the website at DOC.WA.GOV. Dept. of Corrections COVID-19 Information <https://doc.wa.gov/corrections/covid-19/default.htm>

- **Will there be additional measurements taken to screen staff except testing once a week?**

WSP is following the guidelines put out by DOC Prisons Health Services Unified Command Center, which is in support of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Department of Health (DOH). This question is a clinical call. Staff are screened daily for COVID and they receive weekly COVID serial testing.

- **Would it be reasonable to suggest that staff test more than once a week?**

At any time, staff can self-report when they don't feel well. There are options available for an individual to be tested outside the normal serial testing times. This is also a clinical call.

- **If one employee sees another employee with symptoms, can they react to that or do they have to wait the week to get tested?**

WSP has seen that happened. Employees can and have asked individuals to get tested, and they have also been sent home.

- **Why wouldn't staff say why they haven't been vaccinated, and can we see the list?**

WSP is in the process of staff vaccine verification and using guidelines through DOH. The list isn't published, but if we get to a point where we require proof, that protocol would go through HR or someone who is approved to receive personal health information.

- **Have there been people vaccinated who have received the D variant?**

In the Walla Walla community, there have been a high number of members who were not vaccinated who received positive test results for the D variant. We do not have that information about WSP Staff.

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- **Can Incarcerated Individuals still request a vaccine?**

Yes. WSP continues to offer COVID vaccines to I/I. There is a vaccination clinic coming up this Friday, July 30th.

- **Many families reported that the incarcerated individuals (I/I) would be subjected to a 14-day quarantine in IMU if they refused to be tested. Is this true?**

No. I/I will be required to quarantine in place. This is the same practice as when we first started testing and an I/I refused to the test. They are placed in quarantine status for 24-days to ensure they are COVID free.

- **Does this quarantine practice apply to fully vaccinated individuals as well?**

WSP will follow the guidelines put out by Dr. Strick. The 24-day protocol is just for those I/I refusing to test. This practice is considered the most cautious route based on DOC guidelines.

- **What is the quarantine timeframe for staff if exposed?**

This decision is determined by an outside occupational nurse, not from this facility. There is a lot of factors that goes into making this decision. For example: how long was the exposure, are they vaccinated, testing, symptomatic. The time frame could be 10 days with 2 negative test results. This answer varies based on many factors.

- **Several families, who have been to visits, reported that staff do not use face covering at all or incorrectly. What is WSP leadership doing to ensure mask mandates within the facility are being followed? What are the consequences for staff if they don't follow mask mandates?**

If we see staff not following the mask mandates or any COVID protocols, it is addressed. WSP leadership continues to share expectations and protocols with staff.

- **Please address the recent fights. There is evidence staff took information to public Facebook groups.**

(Superintendent Holbrook) A press release went out from the Public Information Office. Outside of that, I don't know what staff may have posted on social media, nor can I control what people do outside of WSP. At this point, nothing has been presented to us to review. If something is presented to us, there are certain avenues we can go down and have conversation around. If information comes forward, it will be treated with face value.

- **Is there a confidentiality statement in place for staff when they go home?**

There is. In conjunction with social media statement above, it is hard to address the issue of someone breaking that confidentiality when nothing has been presented to us for review. Once information has presented, it will be addressed.

- **Have things returned to normal? Are the men off restrictions?**

Some units are off restrictions, but some aren't. We are not fully back to normal.

- **The only way we know if restrictions are lifted is if our loved one tells us. Is there another way to find out?**

No, that is the best way.

- **I was told that yard and programs were closed in the BAR units due to a shortage of staff and staff being mapped out. Why the closures?**

Staffing shortages affect the whole facility. WSP determines what posts not to fill when we don't have enough staff to cover all the posts. We want the programs to run and yards to open and we try to get

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additional staffing to help with various protocols to try to offset these arenas. We are doing the best that we can, given the current situation.

- **Who sets the guidelines for the quarantine and all that?**

DOC Prisons, Health Services, Unified Command Center.

(Can also refer to the website: DOC.WA.GOV. Dept. of Corrections COVID-19 Information

<https://doc.wa.gov/corrections/covid-19/default.htm>)

- **How does the communication get from them to the prison? Can you make recommendations to them?**

Facilities are in daily communication with them by phone calls, Microsoft Teams meetings, emails... we make recommendations if warranted.

- **Any recent suggestions or recommendations to change the guidelines?**

WSP has not been in an outbreak status for some time and we currently aren't in an outbreak status. Nothing has changed as far as our guidelines. We are still requiring serial testing, daily screenings, and self-reporting if needed. Health Services makes the determination if changes are necessary by tracking the data they receive daily. Conditions and guidelines can shift on us over night. Right now, we are trying to get in front of any issues before it gets away from us. Last winter we felt like we were chasing it. In this instance, when staff tested positive for COVID, no one from our I/I population was sharing concerns in relation to COVID, so we decided to get in front of the situation by testing everyone willing to test to prevent a wider spread.

- **We are interested in seeing the data. Are we able to get the results from the tests put into these meeting minutes?**

That information will be given to our COVID headquarters team. If they are sharing it, it will be on the website. DOC.WA.GOV. Dept. of Corrections COVID-19 Information

<https://doc.wa.gov/corrections/covid-19/default.htm>

## UNIT CLOSURE/CONSOLIDATION

## Superintendent Holbrook

Secretary Cheryl Strange sent out a publication regarding unit consolidation and closures. For WSP, phase 1 will be to consolidate Golf Unit. That means that we will move people from that unit and transition them to another unit that will best suit their needs. Unit 10 is not part of the consolidation currently but under the phase 2 portion of the plan. Conversations still need to be had with the Union and review of the CBA.

### Questions:

- **What will they do with the empty unit?**

Once the unit is empty it will be considered a warm closure. This means the infrastructure is maintained and the water and electrical is kept on. It will be kept in a state of readiness if there is need of it. There is also a cold closure which means that the life is shut off by turning off water, electricity, and no upkeep. It means that it is not maintained as it will never open back up for various reasons. Golf Unit will be a warm closure and at this time not used for anything else.

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- **When will that start?**

The process for consolidating has already started, but we haven't moved anyone yet. We are managing the population and following housing protocols.

- **Will we get some kind of communication regarding the consolidation?**

Communication has already gone out to the population. Another level of communication will go out when we get to that point. The publication sent out is attached to these meeting notes.



Unit  
Consolidations ...

- **Does it make sense to have a fully vaccinated ward?**

There's more involved in figuring out where an individual will live than just getting the vaccine. Maybe if we could demonstrate the benefit if everyone got the vaccine and require mandatories, but that's not happening here at DOC.

Unless status changes - Next COVID-19 Teleconference **August 31<sup>st</sup>, 1:00 pm** – via Teams.

Next Local Family Council meeting **August 7<sup>th</sup>, 8:30 am – 10:00 am** via Teams