



For Immediate Release

Two Additional LCCC Staff Members Test Positive for COVID-19

4/14/2020 (Anchorage) – Two additional staff members working at Lemon Creek Correctional Center (LCCC) in Juneau have tested positive for COVID-19. This brings the total number of positive cases of LCCC staff to six, with zero positive tests of inmates.

The Department of Corrections (DOC) has been working closely with the state epidemiology team as well as public health officials to conduct contact investigations for all confirmed cases at the facility. As a result of these contact investigations, roughly 40 staff members from Lemon Creek have been tested for COVID-19.

“In the midst of a pandemic, effective contact investigations help us quickly identify and isolate additional cases. An initial rise in the number of COVID cases after one positive result is expected. It means we are finding the virus and preventing further spread,” said Dr. Robert Lawrence, Chief Medical Officer for the Alaska Department of Corrections.

Staff members who have been tested are permitted to return to work following approval from the state epidemiology team and public health officials. Staff members with pending tests are not permitted to access to the facility until a negative test result is received and current CDC and epidemiologic criteria is met.

To date, four inmates at Lemon Creek have been tested for COVID-19. All four have come back negative. LCCC does not have any pending inmate tests at this time. While an inmate is awaiting test results, or in the event an inmate tests positive, each facility has multiple designated isolation cells to safely house that offender away from general population. An offender who tests positive for the virus will remain isolated until they are cleared by DOC medical providers, the state epidemiology team and public health officials.

DOC continues to mirror the community response and apply the Governor’s mandates to a correctional setting to the extent possible. With the introduction of Health Mandate 011: Social Distancing, DOC has implemented further precautionary measures to protect the health and safety of inmates and staff. The Department is treating each housing mod as a “family unit” or household, and just like in the community, is limiting interaction between “family units” and those in other housing mods when possible. Normally, multiple housing units will recreate together and eat meals together in a “chow hall” setting. Currently, to follow the social distancing guidelines and Health Mandate 011, each mod recreates and eats only with those who are living in their housing unit.

DOC is following CDC guidance for PPE in a correctional facility. All inmates have been issued cloth face coverings and Lemon Creek currently has sufficient supplies of PPE. In addition, DOC has a centralized medical supply office in Anchorage that has additional stock on hand and DOC continues to work with State vendors and the State Emergency Operations Centers to secure more PPE.

The Department of Corrections medical staff has been preparing for the introduction of COVID-19 since January 2020. DOC continues to implement its response plan and take necessary action to protect inmates, employees and the public.

###

Media Contact: Sarah Gallagher, 907-269-5037, sarah.gallagher@alaska.gov