



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**  
P.O. Box 41100 • Olympia, Washington 98504-1110

February 18, 2021

Joanna Carns  
Office of Corrections Ombuds  
2700 Evergreen Parkway NW  
Olympia, WA 98505

Dear Ms. Carns:

The Washington Department of Corrections appreciates the opportunity to respond to the OCO Report on the 'OCO Monitoring Visit to Washington Corrections Center (WCC) December 10<sup>th</sup> and December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020' completed by the Office of Corrections Ombuds.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Response</b>
Incarcerated persons relayed that they are not getting adequate communication from DOC regarding the outbreak, their or the facility's current status, nor any plans the facility has or why actions have taken place that directly impact them. OCO recommends improving the quality, amount, and frequency of communication to the incarcerated population.	The department has provided many venues for communication to the population and will continue to strategize and implement additional methods as the pandemic progresses.  At this time, the facility is conducting a weekly COVID-19 informational call with loved ones of the incarcerated population to provide a facility update and answer any questions posed. The notes from these calls are shared with all living units for reference. Additionally, the facility is providing a written weekly facility update as well as written operational daily updates to the population as the pandemic response progresses. The department will continue to provide information through these venues as well as through verbal communication from daily facility walk-throughs conducted by facility staff.
If there hasn't been at the time of this publication, medical staff should be	Health services staff delivers an incarcerated individual's test results to the



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**  
P.O. Box 41100 • Olympia, Washington 98504-1110

<p>delivering results of the COVID-19 test to each incarcerated person at the facility.</p>	<p>individual in a sealed envelopes with the individual's name, DOC number, and current housing assignment. If the result is positive, it is given to the individual by the transport team assigned to move the individual to medical isolation. All negative results are handed out by unit staff. The process for distributing negative results can take some time to identify and verify individuals for accuracy. The Department will continue to work to provide these results as promptly as possible.</p>
<p>Ensure that staff regularly walkthrough units like R5, as there are periods of time when no staff members are within shouting distance.</p>	<p>Officers, counselors, correctional unit supervisors and leadership staff are consistently doing tier walks throughout the facility. In addition to the prison staff, mental health and health services staff are performing regular rounds of the population and in accordance with the WA State DOC COVID-19 Screening, Testing, and Infection Prevention Guideline and COVID-19 mental health COVID-19 protocols. The facility appreciates the intent of the recommendation and will continue to improve processes and procedures.</p>
<p>Staff should not disable call buttons or threaten negative actions for their use.</p>	<p>The only locations where the facility has call buttons are in the Intensive Management Unit (IMU) cells and nursing call buttons in the In-Patient Unit (IPU). None of these call buttons can be disabled by staff.</p>
<p>DOC needs to develop a plan for legal access for those who need it or speak with the courts concerning filings which, if</p>	<p>While facilities are on restricted movement, the legal liaison at each facility, and specifically at WCC, has been</p>



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**  
P.O. Box 41100 • Olympia, Washington 98504-1110

DOC cannot facilitate the completion of, need to be communicated to the courts as extenuating circumstances.

reaching out to courts and advising them of the facility operational status and restrictions. The liaison then works with the attorneys or courts, who have all be very receptive, and ensured that matters were not adversely affected. For example, the courts and/or the attorney would request continuing matters and continuing deadlines, which have all been approved. The department would encourage all individuals to continue communicating with the facility staff to ensure that the facility can appropriately assist all individuals through this global crisis. The facility has been able to resume law library functions which will enable incarcerated individuals access to legal assistance and documentation resources.

Staff in all capacities are working extremely hard to mitigate the potential spread of the COVID-19 virus within the state's correctional facilities. The Department's work is conducted with an understanding that each day may present a different challenge and our teams are dedicated to performing their jobs and fulfilling their mission to the best of their ability.

The Department of Corrections continues to appropriately align its practices to reflect the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Department of Health (DOH) to ensure the health and safety of the incarcerated population and staff in the state's correctional facilities. The department will continue being part of the solution, adjusting protocols and precautionary measures being taken accordingly during this global crisis.

Sincerely,

Dean Mason, Associate Superintendent  
Washington Corrections Center