



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

October 1, 2020

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 August 5th, 2020' completed by the Office of Corrections Ombuds.

Recommendation	Response
Consider mental health walk throughs throughout the entire facility weekly.	Current protocols require twice a day mental health walk-throughs of isolation and twice a week mental health walk-throughs of quarantine. The Department acknowledges the potential benefits of a weekly mental health walk-through of the entire facility, though at this time, resources do not allow for such an increase in operational practice by the mental health staff at the facility.
Community and cultural groups are not able to program due to the suspension of volunteers at this time. They have asked to lead their own groups, which could be viable temporary option. DOC should consider this as it impacts mental and overall wellbeing.	Yes, Corrections will allow incarcerated individuals to lead their own cultural groups within their assigned housing cohorts and within the normal allowed recreation time. The reason for maintaining the assigned housing allowance is because the Department has implemented a rigorous cohort model to alleviate the impact of a potential outbreak.
Due to a cut back on transfers to other facilities, those housed in cohorts have limited access, activities and entertainment. Consider using the EFV building or the gym as their	The facility has considered these spaces for activities or even living space. However, logistically, the agency needs to keep these areas available in the event of a



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<p>shared living space temporarily. Allowing for activities such as games, television and visiting socially distanced.</p>	<p>sudden COVID-19 outbreak at the facility and they are needed for housing utilization in such an instance. If or when an outbreak occurs, there must be space available to take immediate action to preserve the health and well-being of the incarcerated population.</p>
<p>DOC should consider sharing the strategy process for the transfers that are currently happening. Many incarcerated persons going to same institutions with similar needs are being taken before those who have waited longer. Informing the population why this is happening would alleviate confusion.</p>	<p>Transportation administrator Tim Birley will attend the Statewide Family Council phone call on Friday, October 2 to explain the strategy for transfers currently happening. Based on that call and feedback during that conversation, additional informational needs will be identified for further conversations and information sharing.</p>

Staff in all capacities are working extremely hard to keep the potential spread of the COVID-19 virus from our 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 our mission to the best of our ability.

The Department of Corrections continues to appropriately align its practices to reflect the guidance of the CDC and Department of Health (DOH) to ensure the health and safety of the incarcerated population and staff in the Washington correctional facilities. The department will continue being part of the solution, adjusting protocols and precautionary measures being taken accordingly during this uncharted time.

Sincerely,

Steve Sinclair, Secretary
Washington Department of Corrections