

OCO Monitoring Visit to Monroe Correctional Complex- Twin Rivers Unit and Minimum-Security Unit May 21st, 2020 Conducted by LaQuesha Turner-Early Resolution Ombuds and Race Equity Specialist and Celeste Fox Kump- OCO Intern and Special Projects. Visit to MCC-Special Offender Unit Conducted by Joanna Carns, OCO Director

Background

- The Office of the Corrections Ombuds (OCO) received numerous concerns regarding the Department of Correction's (DOC) response to COVID-19. Additionally, OCO received several requests to enter DOC facilities and perform monitoring visits. For the above reasons, on May 21st, 2020, OCO Early Resolution Ombuds and Race Equity Specialist, LaQuesha Turner and OCO Intern, Celeste Fox Kump, conducted a monitoring visit to Monroe Correctional Complex (MCC)-Twin Rivers Unit (TRU) and Minimum-Security Unit (MSU). OCO Director Joanna Carns conducted a separate visit on the same day to the Special Offenders Unit (SOU), also at MCC. The purpose of the visit was to observe MCC's response to COVID-19.

Executive Summary/Key Findings

- The overall feeling relayed by the incarcerated population was frustration. This was in large part due to fears and stress associated with contraction of COVID-19, lack of activities in cells, negative staff interactions and the recent death of a staff member, which weighed heavy on all at the facility.
- OCO staff observed 90% compliance with DOC staff wearing face coverings (fabric cloth coverings, surgical masks, etc.) and 100% compliance with the incarcerated population wearing face coverings. The incarcerated population was given four masks each and the authorization to make more. They are allowed to wash them in the sink or in laundry. They were all given free soap.
- OCO spoke to one of the individuals they had spoken to in the prior MCC monitoring visit. He informed the monitoring team that subsequent to the prior OCO visit interactions have been more positive. MSU has successfully improved socially distancing in the units and day rooms observed.
- The facility appeared clean and orderly. Porters were observed cleaning throughout the facility. Bottles of Hepastat 256 and germicide heavy-duty cleaner were observed widely available throughout the facility.
- When asked if there were any infractions or behavioral observations being written for the population not wearing masks or adhering to social distancing, staff relayed that several people have received negative Behavior Observations (BOE's).

Statutory Authority

- Per RCW 43.06C.050, OCO has “reasonable access” to all state correctional facilities in order to monitor compliance with respect to the rights and safety of incarcerated individuals.

Observations

Entrance

- At the main entrance of MCC, DOC staff read and asked the screening questions. After answering no to all questions, OCO temperatures were taken by DOC staff. The officer conducting the screening wore appropriate PPE (mask, gloves and a gown).

Main Facility TRU

- OCO observed COVID-19 posted DOC memos, health-safety information posters, and reminders to staff and incarcerated population throughout the facility in both English and Spanish. Most DOC staff were observed wearing face coverings and additional PPE.
 - Staff were observed not wearing a mask in the control both, an enclosed area with other staff present.

TRU Unit A Unit and Quarantine

- At the time of OCO’s visit, TRU A-Unit housed three incarcerated persons on quarantine, each individual in their own cell. OCO spoke with each person. Each person stated they understood why they were there and stated their needs were being met by staff. Two shared concerns with wanting to be released as they were not feeling symptomatic.
- In the regular housing units OCO observed COVID-19 posters, health and safety information including reminders for mask and social distancing. Staff and incarcerated persons were in 100% mask compliance and there were positive interactions between the staff and incarcerated population. TRU was in full compliance with barriers for phone use. OCO witnessed staff assisting with phone communications for incarcerated persons with ADA concerns. The main concerns from TRU were the halt of the TV rental program, the failure of Jpay, inability to socially distance, new mask, mental exhaustion and staff attitudes.
 - The tiles leading to the shower were a major area of concern. There is flooding underneath the tiles causing them to “float” and the continuing moisture is contributing to black mold. OCO witnessed water spraying up as a person stepped on the tile, creating a safety concern for all. Staff informed OCO this was beyond maintenance for the facility. Allegedly this issue was addressed years ago and has

returned. OCO was informed this would need to be a “Capitol Project,” requiring the drainage of the underwater spring there.

TRU Kitchen

- Staff and the incarcerated population were observed wearing masks. DOC was observed monitoring the mainline for social distancing and reminding the incarcerated population to maintain six feet. The dining room was being cleaned by a porter who had working knowledge of the cleaning chemicals and procedures for use. OCO had access to the kitchen prep area. All persons were observed social distancing and wearing appropriate PPE. All handwashing and utilities were in proper working order.

TRU Medical

- In the clinic each person is re-screened by DOC staff before admission. In the waiting area, the seats were socially distanced apart. Medical staff informed OCO that the schedule is consistently monitored to implement social distancing. They verified there were multiple COVID-19 tests available for use. Medical staff was observed wearing PPE. OCO did not see hand sanitizer available for the population.

CI Laundry and Commissary

- OCO observed minimal signs in the CI production areas. Staff informed the OCO monitoring team that they were having more signs made to go up in those areas. Most COVID safety reminders were located near the entrance. Each production area had ample cleaning supplies. Staff and incarcerated persons had on extra PPE, such as heavy duty gloves. There was other PPE readily available to the population. There were markings on the floor designating where to stand. OCO observed proper social distancing and positive interactions. The only concern noted was a leaky roof in the hall leading to CI.

Main Facility MSU

- OCO observed COVID-19 posters, Health-safety information posters including reminders to wear mask. However, OCO observed several staff members not wearing mask and bunched together.

MSU Units A, C and D

- In the regular housing units OCO observed COVID-19 posters, health and safety information including reminders for mask and social distancing. Staff and incarcerated persons were in 100% mask compliance. OCO spoke to one of the individuals in a previous visit OCO witnessed having a negative staff interaction. He informed the monitoring team that subsequent to the prior OCO visit interactions have been more

positive. MSU has successfully improved socially distancing in the units and day rooms observed. There is more space and barriers in the bunk houses and common areas. The phone and kiosk have no barriers. The population was observed putting a sock over the phone for their own protection from droplets. The main concerns shared from MSU were about visitation, mental health needs due to lack of access to their support systems and fear, needing new mask, and lack of communication even if tentative.

Special Offender Unit (SOU)

- OCO attended a tier representative meeting and spoke with the tier reps without the presence of DOC staff. OCO also toured the medical clinic, E unit, the kitchen, and ate a meal with the population.

E Unit

- The unit appeared very clean. No porters were observed cleaning due to it being count, but reportedly they were using the red (germicidal disinfectant) and green (hepastat) cleaning fluids. Appropriate informational posters were posted. Hand sanitizer was available on the unit. Incarcerated individuals were able to maintain social distancing due to being single-celled. Staff were observed wearing masks on the unit, but were also observed not wearing one in the enclosed office space.

Clinic

- The clinic appeared clean. Hand sanitizer was available at entry. There were no incarcerated individuals observed in the medical waiting area due to it being count; staff relayed that they have the individuals sit in the corners of the waiting area so as to be socially distanced. Staff demonstrated markings on the ground to ensure social distancing in the pill line. Staff appeared to be all wearing appropriate PPE.

Kitchen and Dining Hall

- The kitchen and dining hall appeared very clean. OCO observed an incarcerated porter utilizing a bleach solution to clean the dining tables. There was hand sanitizer available in the dining hall. Individuals sat with only one per table to ensure distancing. Mealtimes were staggered to accommodate the reduced capacity. All incarcerated workers and DOC staff were observed wearing masks.
- OCO noted that the meal was very good. The lunch meal consisted of teriyaki chicken and brown rice as a hearty entrée, a banana, fresh baby carrots, cole slaw and a biscuit. The fruit and vegetables were fresh and crisp and the food was well seasoned.

Quarantine and Isolation Units

- OCO toured the quarantine and isolation units, stopping to speak with most individuals who were awake. Most people shared that they had adequate access to food, clothing, and

books, although they all relayed a desire for outside recreation. While OCO was there, staff stated that individuals in quarantine should have access to the recreation area and that they would address it with staff. Staff also demonstrated that they were retrofitting the units to allow for televisions in all cells. Staff showed the phone with the plastic covering that individuals were allowed to use for only ten minutes, once a week; OCO followed up with headquarters and it was immediately implemented for 30 minutes three times a week.

- One individual relayed gratitude for the MCC staff, saying that he had been in and out of the hospital three times, including on a ventilator, and that MCC staff had been very quick each time that he needed to go out for emergent care.
- Another individual relayed that he had spent three weeks in the prior isolation unit at TRU, tested negative and was released for one week, came down with a fever and subsequently tested positive, and was back in the isolation unit for another three weeks. The emotional toll at being in such isolated confinement clearly was enacting a large toll on him.

Incarcerated Person Feedback

- Incarcerated individuals relayed that they cannot trust staff for information. They do not receive updates about how many people have COVID and instead receive it from the news.
- Incarcerated individuals relayed that there is adequate cleaning and that the overall attitude of incarcerated persons was “pretty good” with the exception of frustration at not having visitation.
- They shared concerns related to GTL service that was “spotty” and that video visits “don’t work.”

Conclusion and Areas of Opportunity

- OCO recognizes the changes DOC has made to ease tension during this unprecedented event while maintaining safety, security and the health of all at the facility. At this time, the following are areas of opportunity:
 - All employees in common shared areas should be wearing PPE of at least a mask.
 - As incarcerated persons are currently discouraged from gathering in the dayrooms due to social distancing guidelines, implementation of greater activities in their room should be considered.
 - Consider outside or social distanced activities for those in TRU that cannot socially distance in cells or dayroom.
 - Consider giving weekly situational reports to all incarcerated persons related to current COVID-19 cases at the facility, status updates on the phased return to visitation and programming, self-care mental health-based activities they can apply at this time, etc.

- Consider mental health walk throughs throughout the entire facility weekly or engaging in the wellness program.
- The tiles and mold pose a safety hazard in TRU A-unit. Although the facility staff has done what is in their power to do, a comprehensive plan on what can be done should be developed and increase safety measures to prevent slips or falls in that area.
- Staff should consider providing additional mental health support and activities for persons in the quarantine and medical isolation areas, such as hobbycraft and art materials, a working television and radio for every cell, access to popular reading material such as current magazines and books, and as much access as possible to communication with their families and loved ones.

Appendix A

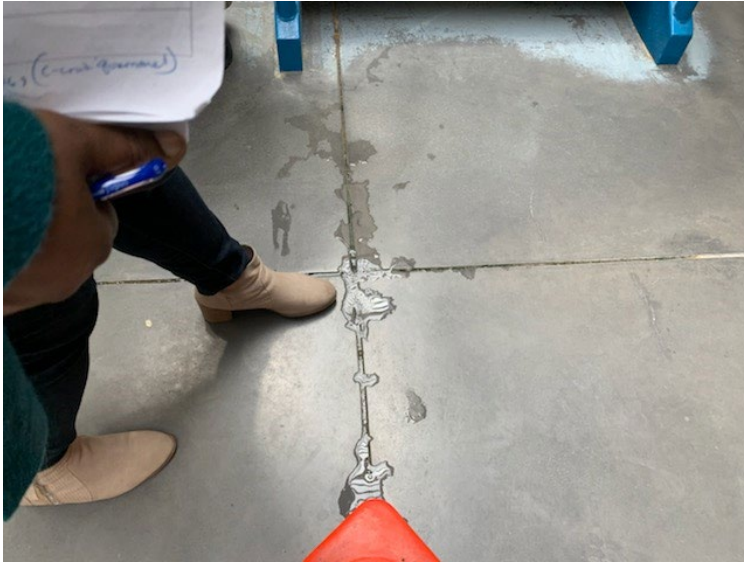


Photo A

Description: Tiles in Unit A that need to be replaced. Water shoots up about 1 to 2 inches and bubbles.



Photo B

Description: Dayroom in a housing unit. The space is so compact, socially distancing proves difficult.



Photo C

Description: Dining room and mainline. Seats are clearly marked showing where to sit; however, at this time everyone is eating in their bunk rooms to lessen the chance of contracting COVID-19.



Photo D

Description: Hole showing the service line. At this time, it did not appear social distancing or other safety parameters were in place.



Photo E

Description: In MSU there is no barrier of protection from one another during phone use. Incarcerated persons using a sock to protect from droplets. This was seen throughout MSU.



Photo F

Description: Average bunk house found throughout MSU. Most top bunks are empty.



Photo G

Description: CI Laundry. There are designated areas for work that allow for appropriate social distancing.



Photo H

Description: CI commissary had more individuals working there at the time of our visit. We witnessed social distancing and abundant PPE. Incarcerated persons were cleaning products before handling them.



Photo I

Description: Entry officer with PPE and touchless thermometer



Photo J

Description: Poster reminding persons entering the facility that face coverings are mandatory.

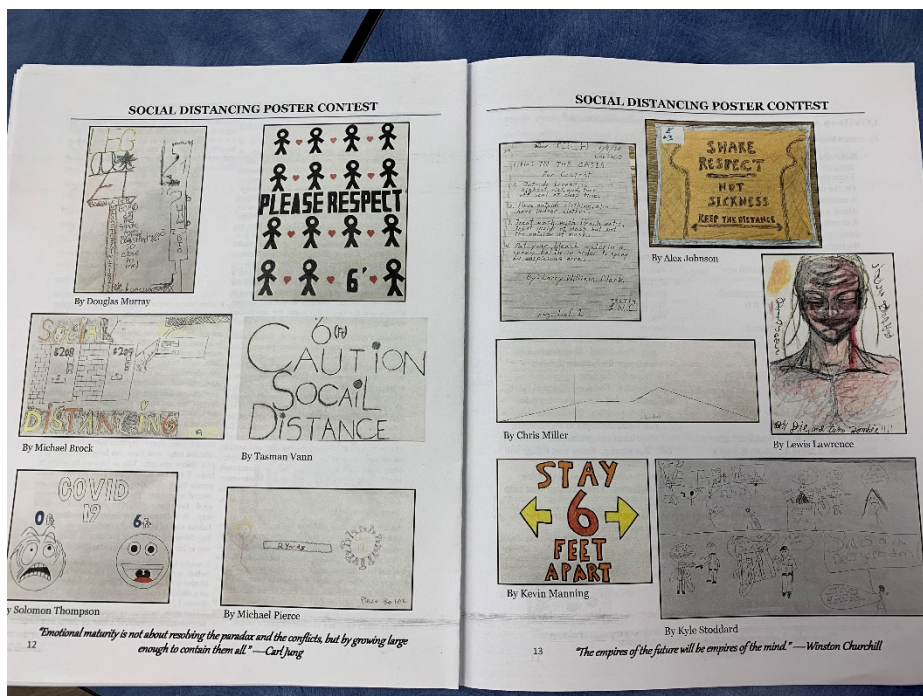


Photo K

Description: MCC SOU held a “social distancing poster contest”



Photo L

Description:
MCC SOU Tier
Rep meeting
with social
distancing



Photo M

Description: MCC
SOU with markings
for outside pill line to
demonstrate where
people should stand
to maintain social
distancing.



Photo N

Description: MCC SOU waiting area for the medical clinic

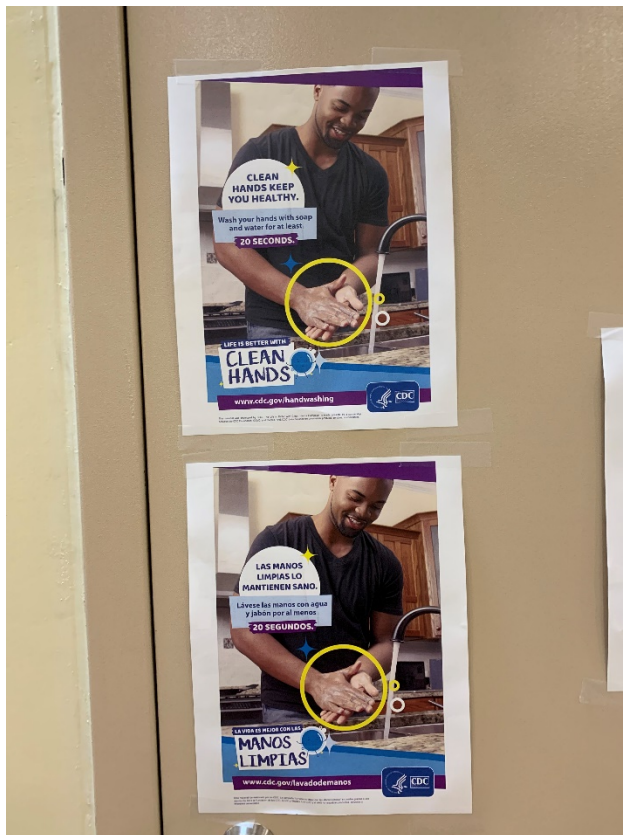


Photo O

Description: COVID-19 informational posters

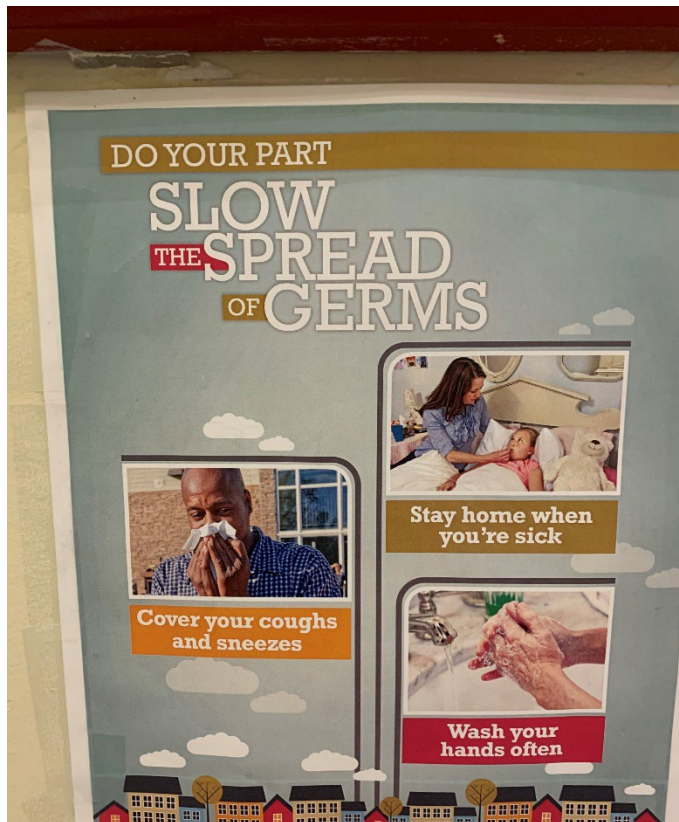


Photo P

Description: COVID-19 informational poster

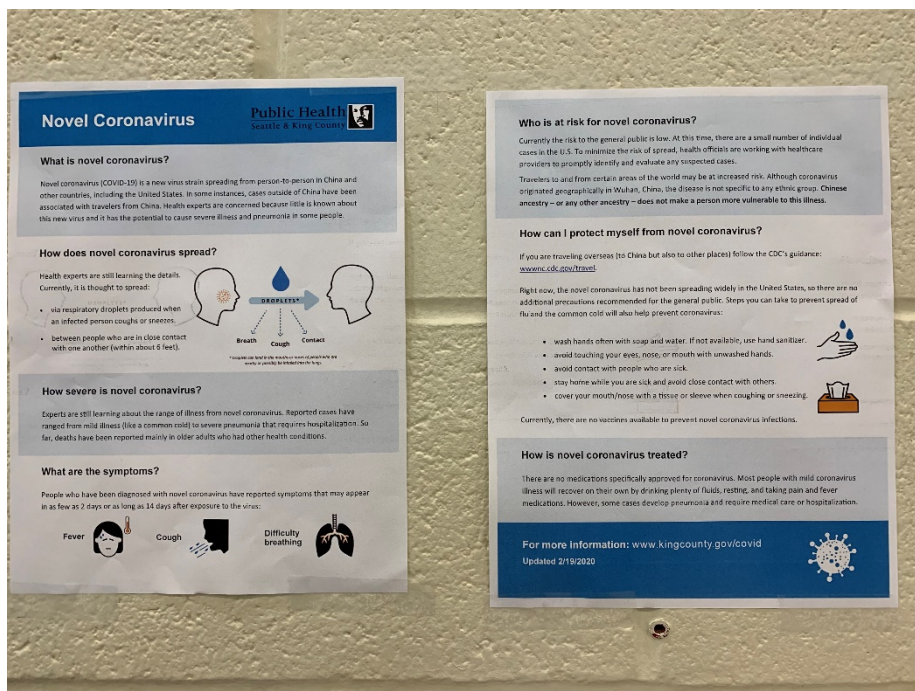


Photo Q

Description: COVID-19 informational poster



Photo R

Description: MCC
SOU kitchen. All
persons wore face
coverings and were
relatively maintaining
social distancing.



Photo S

Description: Single seating in MCC SOU dining room



Photo T

Description: Lunch meal served at MCC SOU, consisting of chicken teriyaki and brown rice entrée, carrots, banana, cole slaw salad, and biscuit.



Photo U

Description:
Temporary staff workspace constructed in same unit as quarantine and isolation tiers.



Photo V

Description:
Isolation unit at MCC



Photo W

Description:
Quarantine unit at
MCC



Photo X

Description: Quarantine unit at
MCC. Shows the permitted in-
cell items laid out for easy
delivery to individuals when they
process into the unit.



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P.O. Box 41100 • Olympia, Washington 98504-1110

August 20, 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 Monroe Correctional Complex- Twin Rivers Unit and Minimum Security Unit May 21st, 2020' completed by the Office of Corrections Ombuds.

Recommendation	Response
Staff were observed not wearing a mask in the control booth, an enclosed area with other staff present.	Staff and the incarcerated population have been required to wear face coverings since early March. The incarcerated population and staff have also received regular reminders from both the local and headquarters levels regarding masking and social distancing requirements. While compliance was still being worked on during this May site visit, the department emphasizes that compliance of face coverings and social distancing has improved as the agency progresses through the pandemic.
OCO observed minimal signs in the CI production areas. Staff informed the OCO monitoring team that they were having more signs made to go up in those areas.	As is stated, MCC made and placed more signs and posters in the CI Commissary/Laundry areas the same week, and these signs and posters are still posted and in place in these areas.
A noted concern was the leaky roof in the hall leading to CI.	The leaking roof at Twin Rivers Unit in the hall leading to CI has been on the Capital Projects list since Dec. 2010 and has not yet been funded by the Legislature.



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<p>Main Facility MSU Unit - OCO observed several staff members not wearing mask and bunched together.</p>	<p>Staff and the incarcerated population have been required to wear face coverings since early March. The incarcerated population and staff have also received regular reminders from both the local and headquarters levels regarding masking and social distancing requirements. While compliance was still being worked on during this May site visit, the department emphasizes that compliance of face coverings and social distancing has improved as the agency progresses through the pandemic.</p>
<p>MSU Units A, C, and D – the phone and kiosk have no barriers.</p>	<p>MCC currently has a plexiglass barrier between each phone and kiosk. Incarcerated individuals have brought to our attention that they don't feel it is adequate in height and length. Therefore the facility is researching options for a different type of barrier that would be taller and extends out further.</p>
<p>The main concerns shared from MSU were about visitation, mental health needs due to lack of access to their support systems and fear, needing new mask, and lack of communication even if tentative.</p>	<p>The department understands and is compassionate to the incarcerated population and loved ones during this time that visitation is suspended. The health of the population is the main priority of the department and because the suspension of visitation will remain in place until further notice to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus in the correctional facilities, the department has consistently worked to increase availability of phone calls and video visits for the population, wherever possible.</p> <p>During quarantine status for MSU, mental health conducted daily wellness checks on the units per the protocols as posted on the DOC COVID-19 response webpage. To</p>



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	<p>accomplish the task, the agency had staff from SOU assist in conducting these walkthroughs when the primary staff were not available. It was a team approach involving other mental health providers from additional sites to ensure that the mental health needs and protocols were met while having to limit group and prolonged 1:1 contact. As areas came off of quarantine, 1:1 services per social distancing protocols increased and small social distancing groups for the Crossroads program were allowed. Staff were always available for mental health crisis situations. Coping skills handouts and distress tolerance packets were, and are, made available for the population.</p> <p>Incarcerated individuals may request an additional face covering at any time, and the staff have been directed to give the requested face covering.</p> <p>The facility has locally written and distributed 15 COVID-19-related written information memos to the incarcerated population, in addition to information distributed from Headquarters. Additionally, leadership, prisons and health services staff have been reminded that this is a time where coming together is important and answering questions and concerns of the incarcerated population is a priority. Verbal response has proven to be effective for many individuals, leaves less room for misinterpretation and allows for follow-up inquiry during conversations.</p>
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<p>SOU E-Unit – Staff observed not wearing masks in the enclosed office space</p>	<p>Staff and the incarcerated population have been required to wear face coverings since early March. The incarcerated population and staff have also received regular reminders from both the local and headquarters levels regarding masking and social distancing requirements. While compliance was still being worked on during this May site visit, the department emphasizes that compliance of face coverings and social distancing has improved as the agency progresses through the pandemic.</p>
<p>Incarcerated Individuals relayed that they cannot trust staff for information. They do not receive updates about how many people have COVID and instead receive it from the news</p>	<p>The department has implemented weekly informational calls with the local family councils at all respective facilities to provide updates, answer questions, and alleviate concerns. The facilities report on the phone calls the data pertaining to their facility and these notes are posted in the housing units each week for reference from the incarcerated population. Housing units are also still holding weekly tier rep meetings where incarcerated individuals are able to ask questions and relay information pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the facility has locally written and distributed 15 COVID-19-related informational memos to the incarcerated population in addition to the informational memos distributed from Headquarters.</p>
<p>All employees in common shared areas should be wearing PPE of at least a mask.</p>	<p>Staff and the incarcerated population have been required to wear face coverings since early March. The incarcerated population and staff have also received regular reminders from both the local and headquarters levels regarding masking and social distancing requirements. While</p>



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	compliance was still being worked on during this May site visit, the department emphasizes that compliance of face coverings and social distancing has improved as the agency progresses through the pandemic.
As incarcerated persons are currently discouraged from gathering in the dayrooms due to social distancing guidelines, implementation of greater activities in their room should be considered.	The agency is allowing each facility to implement their own local activities and in-room recreation that best fits their facility. The Monroe Correctional Complex Twin Rivers Unit (TRU) held a video game tournament from Mid-July to early August for the population, all cells were equipped with a TV and a movie channel was implemented for free for the entire population. These are just some of the examples of creative ways the institution has been able to implement greater activities for the population.
Consider outside or social distanced activities for those in TRU that cannot socially distance in cells or dayroom.	Incarcerated individuals in TRU have access to the gym and yard where they can socially distance during recreation times. The recreation specialist has created programs in which they may participate. Additionally individuals are allowed access to the patio area in front of the unit, where they can interact while practicing appropriate social distancing.
Consider giving weekly situation reports to all incarcerated persons related to current COVID-19 cases at the facility, status updates on the phased return to visitation and programming, self-care mental health-based activities they can apply at this time, etc.	The department has implemented weekly informational calls with the local family councils at all respective facilities to provide updates, answer questions, and alleviate concerns. The facilities report on the phone calls the data pertaining to their facility and these notes are posted in the housing units each week for reference from the incarcerated population. Housing units are also still holding weekly tier rep meetings where incarcerated individuals



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	<p>are able to ask questions and relay information pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the facility has locally written and distributed 15 COVID-19-related informational memos to the incarcerated population in addition to the informational memos distributed from Headquarters.</p>
<p>Consider mental health walk throughs throughout the entire facility weekly or engaging in the wellness program.</p>	<p>Mental health staff are following the WA State DOC COVID-19 Mental Health/Psychiatry Response Guidelines which have specific requirements for individuals on quarantine or medical isolation status.</p> <p>SOU maintains a residential treatment unit, which involves face-to-face mental health contact. Socially distancing groups and individual services continued.</p> <p>WSRU - Incarcerated population was provided a memo to ensure they were aware of mental health services and wellness program. Specifically with instructions on how to access Mental Health services and a distress tolerance packet was made available to them on the units.</p> <p>MSU – Incarcerated population was provided a memo to ensure they were aware of mental health services and wellness program. Specifically with instructions on how to access Mental Health services and a distress tolerance packet was made available to them on the units.</p> <p>TRU - Outpatient services continued</p>



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	<p>abiding by social distancing guidelines. When units are on quarantine, staff conduct the necessary walk-through and rounds per protocols. Packets of coping skills materials were made available to those on quarantine or when requested for outpatient.</p>
<p>The tiles and mold pose a safety hazards in TRU A-unit. Although the facility staff has done what is in their power to do, a comprehensive plan on what can be done should be developed and increase safety measures to prevent slips of falls in that area.</p>	<p>This is a year round problem for the cement slab flooring at TRU A-Unit, as it has ground water from an underground spring coming up between the slabs. Any mold present is limited in scope, quantity and is located in the expansion joints themselves. This area is cleaned several times a day.</p> <p>A Capital project request has been submitted requesting an engineering review and for a mitigation plan to be created.</p>
<p>Staff should consider providing additional mental health support and activities for persons in the quarantine and medical isolation areas, such as hobby craft and art materials, a working television and radio for every cell, access to popular reading material such as current magazine and books, and as much access as possible to communication with their families and loved ones.</p>	<p>Mental health staff are following the WA State DOC COVID-19 Mental Health/Psychiatry Response Guidelines which have specific requirements for individuals on quarantine or medical isolation status.</p> <p>Mental health staff are also frequently handing out puzzles and Sudoku games. Correctional staff are able to issue playing cards, radios and game players to the population. Incarcerated individuals have the opportunity to check out books donated from the Monroe library and when they are moved due to quarantine or medical isolation status, they are allowed to bring two boxes of property with them, to include their JPay player for those that own one, address book, etc. All</p>



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	individuals on quarantine or medical isolation are able to make phone calls three times per week.
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Staff in all capacities are working extremely hard to keep the potential spread of the COVID-19 virus from our facilities, and limited to, and treated within, the one minimum security unit in which it does exist. 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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steve Sinclair", is written over a horizontal line.

Steve Sinclair, Secretary
Washington Department of Corrections