April 23, 2020

Start with what will be sad news for many – this morning was oral arguments for Columbia Legal Services’ lawsuit against DOC/Governor Inslee that asked for the release of prisoners and the Supreme Court has already come out with a decision to dismiss the suit, 5-4.

Update – 300 total tests, still only 13 positive, all at Monroe. My office is starting to take a look at the issue of tests and what is an adequate number and/or what is CDC recommending. Originally, as you know, the suggestion was that only people who are symptomatic should be tested, but we are currently looking at whether it would be valid to suggest expanding the testing to at least people in quarantine who meet high risk criteria. Right now CDC and DOH guidelines still only symptomatic. Great conversation on the Cedar Creek LFC call re testing and someone shared that on the supreme court hearing this morning, it was shared that the community is at like 2% and DOC is at 1.8%, so not out of line with the community.

Posted on OCO’s COVID-19 website under resources is a review of comparison state research regarding releases, testing, and positive cases. This helps inform and provide perspective regarding the number of releases and tests and can also encourage WA DOC to do better if it wants to be at the forefront nationally.

* Updated progress report on DOC’s compliance with CDC guidelines has been posted on OCO’s COVID-19 website
  + Concerns that I have include:
    - proactive suicide risk screening,
    - screening all individuals due to the fact that there are reports that people are not self-reporting because they don’t want to go to isolation,
    - Hand sanitizer – only being kept in supervised common areas
      * WCC shared that it had at least three incidents requiring hospitalization or overnight observation
      * Said that a number of guys actually wrote to him to thank him for removing it.
    - alternative forms of activity for mental health – given crosswords and logic puzzles, which seems insufficient to me, so I welcome any thoughts
    - transfers – DOC says that it has significantly decreased transfers and that it can get me the data. Definitely decreased transfers to MCC and SCCC although that may end this week. Did hear about transfers from WCC to WSP for physicals; as WCC has more space due to reduced intake, hopefully this won’t be needed in the future.
    - Quarantining all new transfers – they are doing it in limited areas. They are quarantining new intake at WCC, and for those individuals that transferred to WSP, etc.
    - Greater access to communication from loved ones – I have heard the complaints about JPAY. Both Anna and I have followed up with DOC and the response that we have received from Headquarters is that they are in daily communication with JPAY to lift up concerns and JPAY says that they’re working on it. Anna is going to provide a report out to the group at the end of this phone call.
    - Releases – this is a concern about people releasing who are symptomatic. DOC’s obligation is to notify the local public health authority. Supposedly the local public health authority then has protocols to follow regarding following up with the person, contact mapping…don’t know how effective that will be if the person is homeless, etc.
* OCO work
  + OCO is continuing to lift up cases to Superintendents. I got a great response back from Supt Haynes that I sent out to a group of SCCC family members that I had the contact of. Others at least acknowledge it and say that they will review it.
  + We are going to extend the time that we are limited in what we are accepting – that’s really because right now DOC is focused on COVID-19 so we don’t have the ability to do the follow-up on cases that is needed if they aren’t as responsive. Through at least May we are only accepting complaints related to medical, mental health, DOC’s COVID-19 response, PREA, use of force, and other bodily harm.
  + Going to send letters to tier reps about our systemic priorities and to get their input on them –will include a pre-franked envelope to respond. Also will send out a Google survey for anyone else who wants to give input.
  + Have started a workgroup related to education access – if anyone has a connection to education or wants to give input, please email Caitlin Robertson.
* Other issues
  + Minimum/maximum savings – no limit, but still have to send it to “immediate family”
  + Reached out regarding having non-family members/red badge volunteers call into the LFC calls and DOC said no – no policy or law violation, so there’s not much I can do there.
  + Heard on AHCC call that the Army Engineers were out there to review the space in case there was a need for a field hospital.
  + Supreme Court hearing this morning related to the Columbia Legal Services case – can watch it on TVW.

Anna’s report on JPAY complaints

* Conducted a survey of family members, which is posted on the Statewide Family Council Facebook page. Gathered 141 responses.
* 44.7% said that the quality of their last 5 video visits was very poor.
* 38.3% said that they could not schedule the advertised two free video visits.
* 51% who purchased movies could not download them versus 14% who could.
  + 80% who did download a movie but could not watch it.
* Regarding the telecommunications contract, DOC is currently getting feedback from subject matter experts. I expect that if we get a new contract, it won’t be effective till January 2021. Due diligence here is very important.

General Q&A

* Can we do a Zoom? The Office of the Chief Information Officer for WA government indicated that we’re not supposed to be using Zoom, that’s why we’re using Skype for Business.
* Sent a letter from Washington Christian Leaders to Secretary Sinclair
* What’s OCO’s RCW? 43.06C
* Why can’t DOC just release everyone who is 12-18 months from release? First, Governor Inslee has already recommended for the release of approximately 1,000 people. The decision to release is the Governor’s and not really DOC’s.
* [Sorry, I missed some of the questions because I was responding to them and also taking notes – JC]