April 9, 2020

OCO Comments:

* In case you were not aware, there was a press briefing about corrections by both Governor Inslee and Secretary Sinclair that responded to many questions. The press briefing can be seen on TVW.
* Due to the disturbance, I have decided that OCO will be going into MCC tomorrow. I did invite legislators. The plan is to speak with the individuals involved with the disturbance, do a wellness check, do a tour of quarantine and isolation units. I will be in PPE provided by DOC to protect those I come in contact with and myself. I will put out a report on this when concluded.
* Sonja is on the call she will be available for questions until 4:45pm.

Questions & answers with Sonja:

* Question: Sinclair said they are not testing staff but AHCC said they are testing staff. Joanna-I can answer that. DOC is not testing staff. They are screening staff and if staff are symptomatic, they are directing staff to go to their personal health provider. They cannot require staff to provide the information as it is a personal health matter.
* Is Governor Inslee going to take a tour of the isolation unit and take a look at the conditions? Sonja-the Governor’s schedule is so packed that he does not have the ability. He is managing the day to day details of responding to the pandemic across the state, and he can’t leave Olympia. When we are able to share more details about the release plan I would like to call more people individually. I’m hoping that we can have more details really soon. The Governor was really clear he wanted people released as soon as possible like next week. If you want to send more details please send emails to Joanna to forward to send to Joanna. If the information the Governor is hearing and saying is not accurate I would like to know.
* How many days to release and who is being considered: Sonja-we are simultaneously looking at furlough, GRE, and clemency. The biggest challenge for those with medical concerns are making sure they still get needs met. There are pros and cons but all are being looked at.

General Community Questions/Concerns

* When you see Monroe will you communicate what is the standard and if they will be given the ability for communications. Joanna-we will go in to MCC tomorrow to tour, will publish a report, will talk to the guys that part of the disturbance, will be transparent about conditions with pictures. Yesterday I got confirmation that people in isolation were using the phone until deemed unsafe due to the threat of germs. They are looking at other options not like covering with a plastic bag. At WCCW the women do have access to the phones and at Shelton they don’t have access. It does vary by institution same with the tablets. There looking at health services passing out loaner tablets for people in isolation. I agree that the conditions are concerning; I will get a better understanding.
* One shower a week is not appropriate. Joanna-I have talked about that and I haven’t gotten a response. I will ask tomorrow and get a response. I heard on the Shelton call that people were able to do a self-bath. I will hear directly tomorrow but I agree a shower every 7 days when sick doesn’t work.
* Who was invited tomorrow for the Monroe trip and any positive responses- legislators, DRW, melody, Q
* More information on the inmate that was released from the hospital and does the facility have oxygen there, is there a wing blocked off for positive patients, will the same nurses and staff be there? Joanna- every prison has an isolation wing and if positive they are going there, they are regular housing units re-designated, unsure about oxygen, if anyone needs that level of care with a ventilator then they are at the hospital. There are health care staff doing daily checks not sure about an assigned nurse. Due to staff movement Obenland is thinking about changing the schedule of staff so that there is more consistent staff.
* Are you the eyes and the ear of the governor why did it take this for you to go into the facilities? Joanna- I stand by my previous decision, we under a stay home order. Going in and out of the facility is dangerous to the population. Most OCO staff are or live with a high-risk group, due to welfare and unknowns there’s several risk. Oversight is very important but our office isn’t essential like the staff who have to go into the facility to run it. We haven’t had a complaint that someone with Covid-19 hasn’t received medical care. We have had complaints that other people with reg medical concerns haven’t been seen. I appreciate the questions and I validate the question and I stand by my previous answer.
* Will you wear PPE? Joanna- Yes if provided, if not I will maintain distance.
* What is essential as far as transfers? - I agree with the concern about transfers and CDC guidance definition says to restrict unless for medical evaluations medical anything, and overcrowding - look at link to CDC guidelines on OCO website, which clearly spells it out. DOC said that they can’t stop transfers because they have a number of people still coming in the door and they have people sleeping on the floor in the reception centers. So they still need to move people around to make room to get people out of the reception centers. They have reportedly restricted all transfers into and out of Monroe and Stafford except when required.
* Is there anything you can do to make DOC be required to make doc wear mask? Joanna- thank you, on the press briefing Secretary Sinclair is going to put out a mandate making all staff wear mask.
* When they are released, are they are just screened, what’s the protocol? Joanna- great question, the testing situation is evolving and we don’t know what that is yet. DOC currently says that people are screened when they leave, but it’s unclear whether that is operationalized across the board.
* Observations- the once a week shower is a red flag for Inslee and Sinclair. Sinclair said that they are not over capacity- AHCC is 200% over capacity. He needs to see that if you guys can’t come in there then people can’t take care of these guys or girls. Sinclair can call and make people wear mask not tell us to wait until its signed in this doesn’t work. Joanna -thank you I hear your concerns I agree with your concerns.

Information/Updates from MCC by Joanna

* I did speak with Superintendent Obenland about the complaints received concerning the fire alarms being pulled but was told it was not a disturbance when we spoke. They were trying to isolate high-risk individuals. They purchased McDonalds to ease the blow. – I realize that was insufficient
* He did acknowledge the violator population has been brought down significantly by 50%.
* Why was the unit where the officer coughing not locked down? The mapping process took time was the response I received.
* Obenland takes those surveys into consideration and makes adjustments.

Updates to OCO’s progress report on DOC implementation of CDC guidelines

* We received responses to where DOC is with regard to the progress report on their implementation of CDC guidelines. The following information is from DOC.
* Did receive progress reports from DOC regarding PPE training for incarcerated people before they begin job assign projects. They are trying to produce mask that will also be given to incarcerated persons.
* Everyone is not getting flu vaccines but I’m requesting that. They are only offering them to people who are high risk.
* Regarding providing sufficient keep on person medications so that people do not have to crowd at pill lines, DOC relayed that medications at a 30 days’ supply currently. They have reached out to vendor to try to obtain a 90 medication supply but have not been successful so far.
* Incarcerated persons may come in contact with other quarantined individuals are being told to wear PPE.
* Suicide screening has not been increased at this time. OCO is concerned about the heightened risk for suicide during these stressful times.
* Daily screening for incarcerated individuals- according to DOC, there are not resources for this and asking population to self-report and tell staff to be aware of changes.
* Conditions of confinement in isolation/quarantine: It was relayed everyone has access to phones, communications, showers in quarantine. They can bring tv as long as there is a cable access, they have access to jpay tablets & kiosk and letters. As previously discussed, conditions in isolation are much different and very restrictive.
* Sink function- we are concerned that broken sinks and a lack of hot water will result in lower handwashing. DOC said that it has sent out a request to all maintenance heads to find out about any not working sinks and will prioritize those.
* I sent emails to Rob and Steve about hand sanitizer- I haven’t received a response. As I’m aware they are still not allowed alcohol-based hand sanitizer. I did find that four states are allowing alcohol based hand sanitizer for incarcerated and I shared that with them.
* Disinfectant and training on how to use it- DOC said that they sent out a training and held a meeting with Superintendents on the correct usage of the disinfectants. Currently there is a misconception that the disinfectants have to be on the surface for ten minutes and that is not true. I have looked at the label for how long to leave the cleaner on the surface: Hepastat 256, 1min and germicide is 5min per the instructions.
* Alternative forms of activities- gardens and boredom buster bags with games
* Transfers: As relayed above, there is a very specific definition by CDC of appropriate reasons to transfer. However, CDC guidelines also say 14 days quarantine after someone has transferred to a new facility. Although transfers have been limited incoming people to the facility aren’t being quarantined.
* Mask for quarantined people- Shelton is working to provide for all people.
* Release screening- they are still evaluating this.
* Continuity of care- they are working with patients with medical needs and helping with the transition to the community connecting them with resources. I will get more clarification on that.