

Joint Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice Oversight
November 17 & 18, 2020
Public Health Measures
Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC)

February 2020

- The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) assisted with the review and approval of all of KDOC pandemic plans. Late February through early March the KDOC in collaboration with The University of Kansas Medical Center Office of Health Care Compliance and KDHE developed guidance in Prevention and Control of COVID-19 in Correctional and Detention Facilities.
- Initiated facility specific planning for COVID-19 response aligning with established COVID-19 response plans / KDHE guidance. Planning incorporated daily facility conference calls and planning sessions monitoring COVID-19 data and emerging best practices. Scheduled conference calls remain an integral part of rapid response and mitigation.

March 2020

- Education and understanding of COVID-19 and its impact on established infectious control measures within KDOC. Posted education materials throughout facilities.
- Began encouraging hand washing and the additional sanitization of high-traffic areas; Confirmation of current laundry processes for effective sanitation of COVID-19 all facilities.
- Leave guidance issued by Governor Kelly with alternative telework or modified works schedules implemented. At-risk categories in addition to possible COVID-19 exposure leave guidance implemented.
- Monitoring of Kansas contract jail providers and out of state placements for COVID-19 mitigation.
- On March 12, COVID-19 response plans / KDHE guidance begun in February finalized
- On March 13, closed facilities to all visitors, tour groups, volunteers and mentors.
- On March 13, issued first communication to residents and family members specific to COVID-19. This continues on a once weekly interval and provides updates on COVID-19 numbers, encouragement and reinforcement of the importance of basic public health preventative measures (e.g. wash hands) and urging compliance with protocols implemented by KDOC (e.g. masks).
- The Prisoner Review Board cancelled in-person comment sessions and encouraged the continued use of mailing/e-mailing comments.
- Beginning March 18, implemented a passive screening process of all employees and contractors.

- On March 18, began providing two (2) free 15-minute phone visits and three (3) 30-minute video visits per week for eligible residents. This has been sustained and is being provided at no cost to Kansas by the service provider, Centurylink.
- Began to limit transfers between facilities to only those needed as a safety precaution for individuals.
- Initiated active screening process on March 23 of all employees, contractors and residents who have off-site work assignments.
- Beginning March 23, Parole Offices closed to the public. Those staff members continue to work, monitoring their clients remotely.
- Beginning on March 25, implemented active screening for any person entering a facility
- During the last week of March, launched additional pages to the external website with content including FAQs, COVID-19 case data, family communication, KDHE/CDC resources, etc. to keep family and the community informed circumstances.
- March 26 suspended the \$2 primary healthcare visit fee for those reporting symptoms consistent with COVID-19 to ensure that there are no barriers to a resident reporting their symptoms. Applied retroactively to March 12.
- March 31 first staff person confirmed positive COVID-19 at Lansing Correctional Facility.
- Contract and community providers of substance abuse implemented virtual programs and services; some stopped coming into facilities. Community mental health providers implemented virtual services.

April 2020

- April 1 waived the \$30 supervision fee for those on post-release supervision.
- Implemented two free stamps by JPAY (email) for residents.
- On April 3, Kansas Correctional Industries and their resident workers began production of cloth face masks with the goal of distributing three masks per staff member and resident throughout KDOC.
- Opened new Intake Isolation Unit at Larned Correctional Mental Health Facility on April 3 using the former Larned Juvenile Correctional Facility building for all new adult males beginning their sentences with KDOC. Separate IIU's also established within current buildings for women at the Topeka Correctional Facility and youth at the Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex.
- April 4, first confirmed COVID-19 positive resident at Lansing Correctional Facility.
- On April 4, implemented a reduced movement plan for the Lansing facility to keep residents from one cellhouse from mixing with another cellhouse. Meals began to be served in cellhouses, rather than the chow hall for all medium and maximum residents.
- On April 6, opened a hotline for family members and citizens to call and seek answers to their questions related to KDOC's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Also implemented an e-mail address for the same cause, kdoc_covid19@ks.gov
- Revised violation and revocation process to limit revocation for condition violations.

- On April 9, cloth face masks distributed to Lansing residents and staff in accordance with the April 3 Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations for use.
- On April 15, first four Kansas National Guard members arrived at Lansing Correctional Facility to assist with medical support. Thirty-four served in total.
- On April 16, after staff and residents at Hutchinson and Topeka Correctional Facilities worked long hours for a week to manufacture 20,000 cloth masks, distribution of two (2) masks per resident and staff was complete.
- On April 23, ten Kansas National Guard members arrived at Lansing Correctional Facility to assist with moving all LCF residents to the newly reconstructed facility.
- Move to reconstructed Lansing Correctional Facility began on Monday, April 20 and was finished on Wednesday, April 29. The new facility has improved airflow, security and the ability to keep surfaces cleaner.
- April 26 first resident death.
- April 29 second resident death.
- Strategies developed to deliver programs virtually and with social distancing, including using zoom model on a large screen, giving recovery coaches access to JPAY communication, making groups smaller and more spread out, etc.

May 2020

- Implemented Pandemic Cash Award Program for staff working at facilities designated to house residents that have tested positive for COVID-19.
- May 1 the first of a total of 18 Kansas National Guard members arrived at Lansing Correctional Facility to support food service.
- May 4 third resident death.
- Mass testing of all LCF residents was completed on May 6.
- Initiated a pilot home-based supervision program for 15 adults and 16 juveniles.
- May 1 request for 20 National Guard troops to assist in food service approved.
- May 11 first staff death.
- May 12 second staff death.
- Suspended operations at the Wichita Work Release Facility indefinitely on May 14 and moved all residents to Lansing Correctional Facility as the location was deemed a COVID-19 cluster site.
- First transfer of 100 older/less healthy residents from the Oswego satellite facility to El Dorado to reduce population of this higher risk population housed in open dormitory style units.
- May 16 fourth resident death.
- Modified policy to allow programming virtually or hybrid in person/virtual.

June 2020

- On June 2, KDHE declared the Lansing Correctional Facility as a contained COVID-19 site.

- The Kansas National Guard ended their assignment at Lansing Correctional Facility on June 4. A total of 62 personnel mobilized in support of the mission at Lansing.
- Initiated additional transfers of older and medically fragile residents out of dormitory-style housing at the Oswego Correctional Facility. Oswego transitioned their mission to serving other less vulnerable residents with a new socially distanced target capacity of 100.
- Set facility specific goals to review and establish revised capacity levels to improve social distancing in all KDOC dormitory-style housing units. By the end of the summer realized a reduction of 1,200 dormitory-style beds in these units.
- Reduction of open dormitory beds also relocated designated high-risk residents to facilities offering better isolation /virus mitigation and proximity to medical clinics.
- Assessed practical impact of virtual programming and identified ways to adapt curriculum and fine tune methods.

July 2020

- Established/implemented testing protocol for all resident movement to include admission, interfacility transfer, out-to-court, in absentia, interstate compact, and releases.
- Supplemental staff assistance protocol implemented to include testing when staff assist another facility in any capacity.
- Mask requirements were expanded department wide on July 3 to include Parole Offices, Central Office and at all facilities, to also include those without positive resident cases of the coronavirus.
- KDOC implemented revised admission processes in collaboration with county jails, local health departments, Kansas Department of Health and Environment and the University of Kansas Medical Center to increase testing of county jail inmates at the jail prior to their transfer to a KDOC facility.
- Conducted assessments of air-handling systems in correctional facilities resulting in recommendations for investment in new and additional heating/cooling system equipment to improve ventilation and reduce potential for aerosol transmission of the virus.
- July 25 third staff death.

August 2020

- Staged additional COVID-19 medical units (CMU) at Hutchinson and El Dorado Correctional Facilities in response to increased positive cases at those facilities.
- Implemented revised protocols for all facilities regarding hospitals to use for COVID-19 and developed prioritized admission process with those local hospitals.
- Standardized criteria for medical staff at all facilities to define when hospitalization is required and method to monitor that the process is followed.

- Delivered training through outsider trainer on how to be effective in doing programming virtually.

September 2020

- After being approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration under their emergency use authorization program on August 26 the portable BinaxNOW COVID-19 Ag Card machines produced by Abbot Laboratories, in September KDHE provided training to KDOC staff on their use and these in place at the most rural facilities. Lansing and the two Topeka facilities will continue to use the state lab for testing.
- El Dorado and Topeka Correctional Facilities intake isolation unit, COVID-19 Management Unit, admissions process implemented. Refinement of admissions testing, quarantine monitoring with testing, Reception and Diagnostic processes, and interfacility placements with testing completed.
- September 7 fifth resident death
- September 16 initiated first of multiple communications to residents, staff and resident families on the importance of the annual influenza vaccination.
- Mandatory training on the “Twindemic” of influenza and COVID-19 deployed for staff.
- September 30 updated residents, staff and resident families on incentives provided to encourage accepting of influenza vaccination and that vaccinations will be provided to all at no cost.
- Exploring development of alternative strategies for court appearances (virtual court) limiting transport exposures.
- Received federal funds to purchase additional units/technology to increase virtual programming in correctional facilities.
- Pursued donations through school districts of Chromebooks to expand access to programming in parole and incarcerated population.

October 2020

- Modeled after practices of private insurance providers who incentivize participation in preventative healthcare practices, implemented a \$5.00 incentive for residents who elect to receive the influenza vaccination.
- The State Employee Health Plan (SEHP) provided a one-point incentive toward reduced health insurance premiums for all State employees who receive an influenza vaccination.
- Released schedule for influenza vaccination clinics beginning October 7 and continuing through October and November at all facilities, regional parole offices and central office. Vaccinations are provided at no cost to residents and employees.
- October 19 sixth resident death
- Transitioned the Larned South unit from Intake Isolation Unit to dedicated housing for aged population

- October 27 seventh resident death
- Conducted testing and demonstrated modified resident visitation program that will provide capacity for family to register for and schedule visitation so it can be deployed when virus conditions may allow a return to visitation.
- October 29 eight resident death
- Finalized a site and a timeline to begin piloting virtual court hearings as early as January of 2021

November 2020

- November 2 ninth resident death
- Implemented revised active screening form based upon changes in public health recommendations
- Began utilizing saliva-based testing as another option for residents and staff