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Jeff Zmuda, Secretary

Laura Kelly, Governor

To: Juvenile and Adult Facility Residents and Family Members

From: Jeff Zmuda, Secretary

Date: August 18, 2021

Re: Coronavirus and KDOC updates

The KDOC Research and Behavior Analytics team has released its annual report on adult recidivism, and there are indications that our rate has improved somewhat. In this latest report, adults released from our facilities in 2017 were tracked for three years to provide data on post release success. Compared to each of the prior years' cohorts, which includes data going back nearly 20 years, this 2017 cohort was less likely to return to our facilities than any prior one. That equates to nearly 68% of returning citizens successfully living in our communities three years after their release.

Multiple factors contribute to this result. KDOC staff and programs are a significant part, as are our service providers in our facilities and community, employers who are more receptive to providing released individuals an opportunity, and most of all families and friends who provide their steadfast support and encouragement. These efforts are giving folks leaving prison an opportunity to lead a better life and are without a doubt making our communities safer, better places to live.

I read a news article recently that quoted a Kansas City-area doctor as saying we have all become so weary of the pandemic that we aren't listening anymore. While I certainly understand the sentiment, we cannot let that attitude take hold within KDOC. Together, following the guidelines and practices of our medical contractors, KDHE and CDC, we must protect the health and safety of our staff, our partners and contractors and our residents. The news is filled currently with the rise in cases in our state and nation. Vaccination is proven to protect against the serious side effects of the Delta virus and wearing of masks is an effective mitigation strategy. Please wear a mask and consider getting vaccinated to help protect yourself and others. Let's each do our part and work together to ensure we stop the spread in our facilities and in our communities.

It is back to school time across Kansas. Adapting to a new daily schedule is never easy, and with debates raging about masks or no masks for students and new protocols to keep our children safe, it might be easy to overlook how terrific it is that our kids are returning to school and college. Parents, grandparents and guardians of school-aged children often find these transitions stressful, and my hope for your family is that it is a smooth and successful start to this new school year.