

714 S.W. Jackson St.
Suite 300
Topeka, KS 66603



Phone: (785) 296-3317
Fax: (785) 296-0014
kdocpub@ks.gov
www.doc.ks.gov

Jeff Zmuda, Secretary

Laura Kelly, Governor

To: Juvenile and Adult Facility Residents and Family Members

From: Jeff Zmuda, Secretary

Date: October 6, 2021

Re: Coronavirus and KDOC updates

I've discussed in previous messages that our current workforce challenges are unlike anything anyone can recall. This is impacting not just the Kansas Department of Corrections and our facilities, parole offices and positions in central office, but employers all across the United States. There continues to be opinions expressed on TV news and in the print media, and more recently research is being published by economists, universities and employer organizations, all trying to identify the cause(s) and potential solution(s) to this workforce challenge. Today I want to address how this is currently impacting our service delivery and the safety of our Kansas communities.

- As a result of the number of vacancies in parole, today over 1,000 persons on post release supervision are either being supervised less and/or by someone else who is covering these cases and their existing caseload.
- In our juvenile and adult facilities, we have closed units to reduce staffing needs, which requires us to house greater numbers of residents in each open unit.
- Vacancies and turnover among our program and reentry staff are limiting our ability to provide the programming demonstrated to reduce recidivism and opportunities to develop the skills needed to earn a living wage upon release to the community.

In addition to the above, this week El Dorado Correctional Facility (EDCF) began implementation of a modified operational schedule. This changes how residents access meals, recreation, programs, and other services that are important to the effective operation of the facility, as well as movement within the facility. The continued decline in staffing levels makes this unavoidable and may have to be followed by additional measures in the future.

We also know that El Dorado is not alone in this. Similar changes may become the norm at other facilities unless the current staffing trend reverses. As additional changes become necessary, we will keep staff, persons under supervision, facility residents and families informed through this message and our leadership at each work location.

Turning to another topic, staff have been working with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) to set up the annual influenza clinics for staff and residents at parole offices and facilities across Kansas. Those details should be finalized in the next few days and may be distributed separately or in this message next week. But an opportunity will be coming to you later this month or in November, and I want to encourage everyone to participate by signing up for a flu vaccination again this year.

To close out this message, this month KDOC's Office of Victim Services is celebrating 20 years of service. On October 1, 2001 KDOC established the KDOC Office of Victim Services (OVS) and hired its first director. Last fiscal year, OVS provided direct services to 10,242 victims and batterer intervention programming to 227 individuals. There are currently 40,978 victims registered with OVS. The department has expanded from providing victim notification - the original statutory requirement - to offering liaison services, restorative justice programming and batterer intervention programming. Congratulations on 20 years of exceptional service to our staff who work within OVS and thank you for your continued commitment to helping and supporting victims of crime in Kansas.