

For Immediate Release

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Confirmed COVID-19 cases at Ellsworth Correctional Facility

TOPEKA, Kansas – Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC) Secretary Jeff Zmuda announced today that two residents at the Ellsworth Correctional Facility (ECF) have tested positive for COVID-19.

Earlier in the month, a staff member at ECF was identified as positive for COVID-19. Contact tracing occurred and mass testing took place of the living unit that had been exposed to the identified staff member. In total, 163 residents were tested.

The residents at ECF are both males over the ages of 40 and 50. Both men are asymptomatic. In order to protect their identities, no other information will be released. Mandatory mask protocol for staff was implemented on May 6 and for residents on July 6.

The KDOC has been in consultation with officials from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) on next steps to address these circumstances. As a result of that consultation with KDHE, the following steps were implemented:

- Both men and two additional men, who were roommates of those who tested positive, were moved to Lansing Correctional Facility (LCF) to be in a more modern facility that is better equipped to control the spread of the virus
- Additional testing will take place at ECF as we continue to work to control the spread

- KDOC will remain diligent in monitoring other staff and residents for symptoms

“We are so thankful for the continued support of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. Their staff respond quickly to ensure that we are helping keep these men healthy and safe,” Zmuda said. “We are glad to report that both men are asymptomatic and are hopeful they’ll be able to return to Ellsworth soon.”

The Ellsworth Correctional Facility opened in 1988. Serving only males, the Central Unit provides housing for 820 multi-custody residents and the East Unit provides housing for 95 minimum-custody residents.

For current information on COVID-19 in Kansas, and to sign up for updates, go to the KDHE COVID-19 Resource Center at kdhe.ks.gov/coronavirus. For information on the KDOC’s response to COVID-19, visit <https://www.doc.ks.gov/kdoc-coronavirus-updates>.

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