

Jeff Zmuda, Secretary

Laura Kelly, Governor

To: Juvenile and Adult Facility Residents and Family Members

From: Jeff Zmuda, Secretary

Date: December 2, 2020

Re: Coronavirus Updates

I want to use this opportunity to advise that in the next few weeks we plan to relocate our residents who have been residing in Arizona back to Kansas. In October 2019 KDOC transferred 120 residents to the Saguaro Correctional Center in Eloy, Arizona. This was done to manage the growth Kansas was experiencing in our prison population. Our intent was to return our residents by the end of June 2020, but – as has been the case in so many instances – this goal was disrupted by the pandemic. We have periodically revisited the original goal and have determined that now is the time to initiate the process to return these individuals by the end of this calendar year.

I know that “pandemic fatigue” is creeping up on all of us, and test fatigue is very, very real! There just is no way to avoid testing and effectively mitigate the spread of this virus. We were hopeful that using the saliva-based test would be an alternative that could offer a relief to multi-testing, but that has proven to be less effective than we had hoped. Many may wonder why we do repeat testing. This is in accordance with KDHE and CDC guidance, and our own medical experts who continue to study and observe how the virus acts and reacts. It is that guidance that necessitates us test at first exposure and then a minimum of twice more. New potential exposure can cause the process to restart. I know we have a number of folks who have had to be tested on multiple occasions. For those in that category, hang in there. We will continue to explore and utilize the best available processes and materials for testing and mitigation of virus spread.

Most of you have probably been hearing about a vaccine for the COVID-19 virus. There is some good and some bad news regarding vaccines. No COVID-19 vaccine is yet authorized and recommended for use in the United States. However, several vaccines have reached the clinical trial stage of development and that is very good news! In anticipation of a vaccine being approved soon, the Federal Government and States are gearing up for initial distribution of some vaccine and administering vaccinations as early as this month. We will share details regarding our access to vaccine, distribution, timeframes and other information as soon as those details are solidified and available.

Among our residents and staff, please know that we continue to be very concerned about exposure to the virus in the workplace and continue to adapt our strategies and tactics as we learn from what the science tells us. Protocols may vary slightly depending on the requirements in your facility, but if we all continue to cooperate and pull together, we can get through this. We must all do our part. Wear your mask. Respect the advice to social distance and honor each other’s efforts to stay safe and healthy. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds (sing Happy Birthday to yourself twice should be about enough time). If you are feeling unwell, please alert the appropriate staff immediately.

No data will be included with this message, but please refer to the data distributed Monday November 30<sup>th</sup> and the next will be Thursday December 3<sup>rd</sup>.