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Jeff Zmuda, Secretary

Laura Kelly, Governor

To: Juvenile and Adult Facility Residents and Family Members

From: Jeff Zmuda, Secretary

Date: December 30, 2020

Re: Coronavirus Updates

As 2020 draws to a close, I am reflecting on the many challenges we faced together. Each problem created new opportunities to find solutions. We all learned new ways to live, communicate and collaborate. We will carry these lessons with us as we embrace a new year!

It is with heavy hearts that we mark the loss of one of our own. Gabe Morales, El Dorado Correctional Facility Unit Team Supervisor and a program provider, passed away from health issues related to COVID-19 on December 22, 2020. Gabe leaves behind a wife and two children in addition to other family. His loss is deeply felt by the many grieving co-workers and residents who loved and respected him. Here is a link to Gabe's obituary with more information about his life and the lasting impact his commitment to our residents and his unique brand of joy will have for many years to come: <https://www.dunsfordfh.com/obituary/gabe-morales>.

You may have seen media coverage of comments by Governor Kelly regarding COVID-19 vaccines. We continue to work with the Governor and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) on access to and distribution of vaccines and will update you as new information becomes available. Please also monitor developments through the Governor's weekly media conference every Wednesday at 4 p.m. Updates are also available on the KDHE website: COVID-19 Vaccine | KDHE COVID-19 (kdheks.gov). As a reminder, all resident and staff COVID-19 positive cases are posted twice a week on our website, Mondays and Thursdays by 5 p.m. <https://www.doc.ks.gov/kdoc-coronavirus-updates/kdoc-covid-19-status>. Even with the welcome news of COVID-19 vaccines, we cannot abandon the health and safety protocols we have in place. Please wear a mask, socially distance whenever and wherever possible, wash your hands frequently, monitor your health daily for any symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath and clean and disinfect your environment frequently.

Congress passed full access to Pell Grants for all individuals in prison on December 21, 2020, reversing the ban that went into effect in 1994. President Trump signed the bill Sunday, December 27, ushering in a new era of access to college and post-secondary education through Pell Grants for incarcerated individuals, regardless of length of sentence or previous access to the limited Second Chance Pell sites across the nation. Kansas is well-situated for this development with the Kansas Consortium on Correctional Higher Education and a strong partnership with the Kansas Board of Regents. This is a very important development in the KDOC's goal of providing all incarcerated individuals with programming and services to prepare to achieve a livable wage employment at release, which is a bedrock to success upon return to the community.

Wishing each of you and those closest to you a Happy and Safe 2021!