

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

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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 15, 2021

Re: Coronavirus and KDOC updates

I'd like to begin with a quick word about staffing challenges. We continue to work hard to keep interruptions to daily routines at a minimum. When restrictions are put in place it is not as punishment. They are needed as safety measures for both staff and residents. None of us can predict how or when the labor market may change and we will hire staff to help us return to normal operations, but I am optimistic that day will come. While we are facing challenges most cannot remember facing before – such as a pandemic and this labor market – we are continuing to make progress in so many areas of our operations.

I'd like to share some of that progress with you in today's message. Under our our strategic plan, Pathway for Success, we have five Strategic Implementation Teams hard at work. The Employee Environment SIT has three sub-teams focusing on various issues, including staff retention and recruitment, staff development and wellness. The Communications SIT has completed a survey and developed a report primarily focusing on staff communication as an initial project.

The Population Environment SIT has three sub-teams centered on issues relating to residents within our facilities:

- One sub-team is working on implementing Positive Behavior Reports (PBR) for observed positive behavior. Residents who receive a written PBR then receive a small reward. Pilots of the program have concluded at Lansing, Topeka and KJCC, with Ellsworth wrapping up the final 90-day pilot in December. The sub-team is now analyzing data on the effectiveness of the pilot program.
- Another sub-team is focusing on population opportunities and is piloting the use of ACE (Adverse Childhood Experience) screenings during RDU at Topeka and El Dorado. The goal is to identify needs, then improve the opportunities residents have to access specific trauma-informed strategies/programs that can help them gain resilience and healing.
- A third sub-team is working on changes to facility environments that could minimize negative behavior issues. These changes might range from color palette choices to altering lighting and controlling noise levels. The team continues its research and is working on specific plans for the coming year.

The Resource Deployment SIT has developed and tested a tool at El Dorado for staff to report the condition of computers and chairs and is now working on a plan to launch the tool at all sites. The team also completed a staff survey of the use of CBI (Cognitive Behavior Intervention) techniques, including staff training and effectiveness. This study will help support changes and improvements that will be recommended in the coming year.

The final strategic implementation team – Grants and Resource Attainment Literacy SIT –completed a survey of staff and volunteers about how receptive they were to certain tasks being performed by volunteers, residents, parolees or probationers. Based on survey results, the team will develop recommendations on ways to increase efficiency and provide meaningful opportunities for others to become involved in our vision of *Transforming Lives for the Safety of All*.

Please remember this is not an all-inclusive list of progress to date! I've focused for the most part on tangible changes, but every team is hard at work gathering data, researching best practices, and more importantly, talking with other staff members on ways we can improve. I look forward to sharing more with you in the coming months.