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Jeff Zmuda, Secretary

Laura Kelly, Governor

To: Juvenile and Adult Facility Residents and Family Members

From: Jeff Zmuda, Secretary

Date: July 21, 2021

Re: Coronavirus and KDOC updates

Two KDOC staff members presented a session for the Correctional Mental Health Care Conference this week. Their presentation, "Trauma-Informed Accountability with those who Engage in Domestic Violence," was presented online with an interactive Q and A session. The session was well received and provided an opportunity to highlight an important part of our work.

Unfortunately, we are seeing increases in COVID-positive cases in our state, and that trend is reflected in KDOC facilities. I hope our rise in numbers of positive cases is soon over. However, as we learned over this last year and a-half, our facilities are very much a reflection of their respective communities. With staff and some residents coming in and out, contractors, visitors and delivery personnel on site, this virus can spread quickly. The majority of current COVID-positive cases have been found among folks who are unvaccinated. It also appears those who are vaccinated and contract the virus do not experience severe symptoms, but as with most anything to do with the coronavirus, there is a lot that still is unknown.

What we do know is that following public health and safety guidelines helps slow the spread of this virus. If you have not yet opted for vaccination, I ask you to take another look at the research and consider what is right for you and your family. You can find more information at <https://www.kansasvaccine.gov/>.

I want to also reinforce the need for staff, residents and visitors to wear masks and practice social distancing whenever possible. I understand the frustration with these continuing protocols, but they are necessary and needed. With a resurgence of the virus as I noted earlier, particularly in our facilities, the wearing of masks is a tactic to help us minimize the spread. My request and my expectation are that each of you will continue to do your part to help put this public health crisis behind us.

Two of our facilities hosted live music events this week. Both Topeka and Lansing correctional facilities were visited by Amanda Pruitt and Tim Nowell who appeared as part of their tour. These outdoor events were a refreshing change of routine and we appreciate their time and talent.