

Jeff Zmuda, Secretary

Laura Kelly, Governor

To: Juvenile and Adult Facility Residents

From: Jeff Zmuda, Secretary

Date: March 18, 2021

Re: Benefits of Coronavirus Vaccination

Due to the leadership of Governor Laura Kelly to prioritize our population along with other higher risk persons and settings, the efforts of our team, and your acceptance of the opportunity to be vaccinated, 4,993 or 57.3% of all KDOC residents have been vaccinated as of the March 17, 2021 vaccination report. And more of you are getting the opportunity each week as we continue to receive additional allocations of vaccine.

Today I want to thank all of you who have been vaccinated, and encourage everyone else to accept the opportunity when we are able to offer it to you within the next few weeks, or if you have previously declined the opportunity I ask you to reconsider. If you are interested in being vaccinated, you might consider:

- In very simple terms a vaccine forces your immune system to make antibodies against a specific disease. Then, if you come into contact with them again, your immune system knows what to do.
- None of the COVID-19 vaccines being administered by KDOC vaccination clinics contain the live virus that causes COVID-19 so a COVID-19 vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19.
- All COVID-19 vaccines being administered by KDOC have been shown to be highly effective at preventing COVID-19 and experts believe that getting a COVID-19 vaccine may also help keep you from getting seriously ill even if you do get COVID-19.
- Getting vaccinated yourself may also protect people around you, particularly people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- Once an individual completes the vaccination series, about two weeks after completion, the benefits are realized eliminating the need to quarantine if an exposure occurs. Not having to quarantine allows the individual to maintain activities without Covid19 testing during quarantine periods.
- Mitigation protocols to include wearing masks, distancing, good hygiene and frequent hand washing are all critical to moving forward. These mitigation strategies reduce possible exposures that may occur in any environment a person is in.

Last week the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) released the first set of public health recommendations for fully vaccinated people. That guidance will be updated as additional progress is made nationwide on vaccinations and as level of community spread of COVID-19 hopefully declines. However, that guidance begins to relax some of the mitigation strategies every community and citizen have been encouraged to follow over the past year. While that guidance is still more restrictive even for fully vaccinated residents in non-healthcare congregate settings like our correctional facilities, it is the most hopeful guidance we have seen in over a year. I hope that each of you who have not been vaccinated will elect to do so as your contribution to continued progress in overcoming the COVID-19 virus.