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Jeff Zmuda, Secretary

Laura Kelly, Governor

To: Juvenile and Adult Facility Residents and Family Members

From: Jeff Zmuda, Secretary

Date: March 8, 2021

Re: Housing at the Larned Correctional Mental Health Facility

I want to take this opportunity to update our residents and families on some important next steps at the Larned Correctional Mental Health Facility. While only a portion of our residents reside there, and not all families have a loved one at that facility, a change at one facility can impact other locations so we want to share this information with everyone.

As you may recall, in the early stages of the coronavirus pandemic, we were able to bring online a vacant building on the grounds at Larned, referred to as Larned south. This was initially used as an intake isolation unit. As our pandemic response evolved, the resident population changed and we now housing an older population at Larned south. The additional costs of operating Larned south have been funded with federal coronavirus relief funds. These funds have nearly been expended and do not provide for sustained operations long term.

Last week we finalized a plan for continued operation of Larned south, but the plan requires another transition for our residents. The cost to continue operation of the south unit will be funded by suspending operation of the west unit. Minimum-security residents at the west unit will transition to the south unit. Using the south unit, constructed about 20 years ago for juvenile offenders, instead of the older west unit will improve housing and safety for both residents and staff and is sustainable. While this is a positive change for those currently in the west unit, it requires another move for those currently in the south unit.

I understand that our coronavirus response required current residents of the south unit to move from Oswego, and that another move is a disruption. We do not take that lightly, and we have done so in the interests of your needs and to reduce the healthcare risks associated with COVID-19.

Our long-term plan, included by Governor Laura Kelly in her budget request to the Kansas Legislature and progressing this session, is to have a specifically designed and operated facility for our older population to be located at Winfield Correctional Facility. Such a facility has long been a need for the Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC) and is a reality I am confident will be funded. However, when funded it will take about two years to bring online.

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Until that facility is operational, we must ask our current residents at Larned south to work with us through an interim solution. This solution will be determined specifically for each of you. Members of our team at Larned along with staff from both our Facilities Management Division and The University of Kansas Medical Center here in Central Office will review your current medical, behavioral health and programmatic needs to make the best match to services provided by one of our other facilities.

As you might imagine this requires a lot of coordination and will take some time to complete. Moves are beginning and we have targeted June 1st as a completion date. Throughout this process, Warden Easley and his team on site at Larned will maintain regular communication with those directly impacted by this transition.

This plan to suspend operations in the west unit and sustain operations in the modern south unit is one step toward implementing our new *Pathway for Success* Guiding Framework. This is just one of many decisions and plans that will be implemented for the betterment of our system and the citizens of Kansas in the months and years to come.