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Jeff Zmuda, Secretary

Laura Kelly, Governor

To: Juvenile and Adult Facility Residents and Family Members

From: Jeff Zmuda, Secretary

Date: November 17, 2021

Re: Coronavirus and KDOC updates

With the fall season nearing an end, which will be quickly followed by the start of a new year, I have been spending more time visiting our locations across the state before the winter weather makes travel less predictable. When I visit, I see the fatigue from long hours, excessive overtime and the increased workloads. I see the additional stress caused by disruptions in daily activities and routines. I also see and hear the amazing commitment to our mission and vision, and to each other, traits that are helping us make it through these challenging times. The solutions to the challenges we all face do not come easily and will not resolve quickly. I continue to be hopeful we will have some solutions identified soon that will improve conditions for everyone.

Along with that, I would like to highlight an element of our Pathway for Success that is especially significant at this point and time. 'Fostering Dignity and Safety' recognizes that each person deserves to be treated fairly, supported and to feel safe. This applies to us all. Employees in our work setting, individuals on supervision in the community, residents in our facilities, families, stakeholders and partners working with us in any setting. When we honor individual differences with mutual dignity and respect, we grow as individuals, and we can help one another through times such as these. Please join me in helping bring these words on the page in our strategic plan to life in the manner in which we treat others. Let's ensure that our mindset and how we live each day becomes a part of the culture we all desire.

I recently learned of a positive story from a staff member and I wanted to share this with you. This parole officer shared that there are some populations that are more difficult to supervise than others, but by "listening more and judging less" they feel they have become more effective. One success story they shared is about an individual who was released a little over a year ago and continues to make positive decisions that are resulting in success. This individual is quick to credit the support he received - and continues to receive - through KDOC as a major part of his continuing success. He also notes that he took advantage of that help and support as a resident, attending programs and classes when offered. He is now enrolled in community college and writes of his experiences in uplifting articles shared through a partner ministry publication.

One of the many barriers to successful reentry is the lack of a valid driver's license or Kansas Identification Card. We continue to partner with the Kansas Department of Revenue Division of Motor Vehicles and the Kansas Office of Vital Statistics to assist residents with obtaining these important documents. Any resident who has had an active driver's license in the last 10 years can mail in information to get an updated license or identification card. For those who cannot gain the documents in that way, mobile units are coming on site to all facilities to work with groups of residents, and permanent units have been established at Topeka and Lansing correctional facilities for residents to work with KDOC and KDOR staff to address issues.

Since the mobile and onsite unit processes started, we have been able to process 493 driver's licenses and/or identification cards for returning citizens. Please contact facility staff who will help residents navigate the rules and processes.

KDOC is finalizing a plan for all facilities to provide a COVID-19 booster shot for any resident who wishes to get one. Please contact your facility's medical staff for more information. Generally, for those who received Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, you are eligible for a booster shot after six months following your final shot. For those who received the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, the timing is two months after the original vaccination. Deciding whether to receive the COVID-19 vaccine or a booster shot is a personal health decision, and I encourage you to learn more about your options and the vaccine.