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Jeff Zmuda, Secretary

Laura Kelly, Governor

To: Juvenile and Adult Facility Residents and Family Members

From: Jeff Zmuda, Secretary

Date: September 1, 2021

Re: Coronavirus and KDOC updates

Labor Day 2021 will be observed Monday, September 6. The special day was recognized by labor activists beginning 1882. States soon began to adopt the holiday, and on June 28, 1894, President Grover Cleveland signed a law making the first Monday in September of each year a national holiday. The day is in recognition of the contributions American workers have made to bring progress and prosperity to our land. In today's terms, it is in recognition of our dedicated, professional workforce who make a difference each and every day. For many, Labor Day signals the end of summer – even though Fall doesn't officially start until later in the month. Whatever activities or plans you may have for this three-day weekend, please be safe.

We received updated state agency guidance last week for our employees regarding COVID-19. You may have seen in the media that the state is resuming work from home protocols for our employees. I share this information with you today so that you will know what this means for KDOC and how this applies to our 24-7 operation at our facilities, the supervision of persons in the community, and the functions in our administrative and central offices.

Unlike the Spring of 2020 when we received similar guidance, we are in a different phase of our response to this pandemic. This is due in part to our mitigation protocols, vaccinations and availability of supplies and equipment. We are not closing our public facing operations or suspending services such as visitation. The mask requirements are not new across KDOC. I do want to again remind everyone of the requirement to wear a mask in our work locations. We have continued our safety protocols for in person meetings, trainings and groups, and kept the provisions of a virtual alternative for persons on supervision and in our facilities. Those activities will continue at this time and no other changes are currently necessary under these guidelines. We must of course remain flexible and responsive to changes that may happen in the days and weeks ahead. When that may occur, we will do everything we can to communicate any changes promptly and effectively.

With Fall upon us, there are many opportunities for community-based events, often involving crowds of 500 or more people where participants cannot socially distance and may not wear masks. One example of this is the Kansas State Fair, coming up in a couple of weeks in Hutchinson. KDOC, along with many other state agencies, has traditionally had a presence at this event. However, with the COVID-19 surge our state is currently experiencing, we will have a very limited staff presence at the State Fair this year and will not continue with plans to staff our building.