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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 29, 2021

Re: Coronavirus and KDOC updates

I'd like to draw your attention to the flagpoles at your facilities and around your communities. The flags are currently at half-staff by order of Governor Laura Kelly. This is in honor of the more than 6,000 Kansas lives lost due to COVID-19 and the families they have left behind. It is a sad and sobering reminder that we must all continue to do our part to protect ourselves and each other.

On September 24, Governor Kelly announced Kansas will adopt the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Booster Recommendations and authorized all COVID-19 vaccine providers to begin administering Pfizer Booster shots to all eligible Kansans. KDOC, under guidance from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), will begin offering the Pfizer Booster shot to staff and residents who completed their primary Pfizer series as of March 31, 2021.

Anyone 65 years of age or older and individuals who are aged 18-64 years and are at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of occupational or institutional setting may receive a Pfizer Booster shot, based on their individual benefits and risks. Vaccination clinics at KDOC Facilities will begin to include the Pfizer Booster in the weeks ahead. Additional groups will be added to eligibility in the coming weeks and months, based on the date of completed initial vaccine series, type of vaccine administered and evolving guidance from CDC and KDHE.

Last Saturday, Sept. 25 was the National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims. Each year KDOC's Office of Victim Services (OVS) pauses on this day to remember the lives lost to homicide. Preliminary FBI data shows a staggering 25% increase in homicides in the U.S. in 2020 over the previous year.

One program offered by OVS for families of homicide victims is Victim Offender Dialogues (VOD). A VOD is a structured process, giving victims of violent crime an opportunity to have a one-time facilitated conversation with the offender of the crime. Of all the VOD requests we have received from victims throughout the years, 60% have come from family members of homicide victims. Even decades after the crime happened, family members are often still seeking answers and closure that possibly only the offender can give them. For those with internet access you can learn more about this and other services and support on our website <https://www.doc.ks.gov/victim-services> .