**CIC | District of Columbia Corrections Information Council**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Re: CIC Visit to DC DOC on April 6, 2020

On Monday, April 6, 2020, CIC Program Analyst Kareem McCraney and DC Councilman Trayon White (Ward 8) conducted a site visit of the Central Detention Facility (CDF) at the DC Department of Corrections (DOC). The goals of the visit were to learn about the processes and preventive measures recently implemented in order to minimize the opportunity for residents and staff to contract and/or spread COVID-19, and to observe the overall conditions of the population.

The visit started with a meeting attended by DOC Director Booth, Warden Lennard, and Medical Director Jordan. After the opening meeting, we visited three housing units: SE-3, NW-2, and NO-2.

During the course of this visit, the following issues were explored:

* The screening process for COVID-19 as residents enter and exit the facility.
* The Quarantine, Isolation, and Intake units.
* The number of residents and staff who tested positive for COVID-19.
* The impact of DC’s emergency legislation on the DOC population.
* The current conditions of the residents.

## Screening Process

According to the DOC, screening processes began on March 13, 2020. When an individual is initially arrested, he is screened at the Central Cell Block (CCB), which is located at DC Metropolitan Police Department headquarters. There is always a nurse or doctor on hand at the CCB. Some people are issued a citation and released from the CCB without transferring to DOC custody. For those who are transferred, they are re-screened upon arrival to DOC facilities.

People who arrive to Receiving & Discharge (R&D), which is the intake area for the DOC, have their temperatures checked again, and they are asked if they are experiencing any symptoms. If the answer is yes, then the individual is separated and taken to the medical unit, where their temperature and vital signs are examined, and a flu test is administered. If there are positive signs of the virus, the individual is placed in either quarantine or isolation (see below).

Most trials for criminal cases have been postponed, but some cases and hearings have proceeded via video conferencing. For cases that require in-person appearances, those residents are screened before they leave for court, and again upon their return.

## Quarantine, Isolation, and Intake Units

In the Intake unit, residents entering the facility are required to stay in Intake for 14 days before they are allowed to enter the general population. During this time, their temperatures are taken twice a day, and they are questioned about any symptoms. If a resident is exhibiting any symptoms while in Intake, he/she will be sent to a quarantined unit until a determination is made regarding whether the resident is positive or negative for COVID-19.

According to the DOC, all residents who exhibit any symptoms of COVID-19 are placed in a quarantined unit or space until it is determined whether or not the resident has tested positive or negative. If only an individual has potential symptoms or a strong likelihood of exposure to the virus (as opposed to an entire cell block), that individual is sent to a quarantined space. If necessary, an entire cell block may be quarantined. In the quarantine units, medical staff check temperatures twice a day, and check for other symptoms. If the individual tests positive while quarantined, the resident is sent to the Correctional Treatment Facility (CTF).

The Isolation unit, which is located at the CTF, houses all of the confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the DOC. This unit is run by medical personnel from Unity Health Care. There are correctional officers within this unit, and - according to executive staff, the officers have protective equipment, but it is mostly the medical staff who is dealing with the residents in this area.

## Number of residents and staff who have tested positive

According to the DOC executive staff and its medical director, Dr. Jordan, at the time of this visit - the DOC had:

* 44 residents tested for COVID-19
* 20 positive tests
* 13 tests pending results
* 10 tests were negative

There were 3-4 staff members who allegedly tested positive, but only one of those staff members was verified by DOC. The other staff members relayed their positive status to the DOC, but they were not tested directly by the DOC.

## Emergency Legislation Impact on the Population

According to the executive staff of the DOC, the emergency legislation has not done much to reduce the current population. At the time of this visit, there were only approximately fifty sentenced misdemeanants who would qualify for the emergency legislation and potential release, because candidates must already be sentenced in order for the legislation to be applicable.

For individuals who are being held for technical violations with parole or probation, the DOC does not have authority to release them. The authorization must come from the US Parole Commission or CSOSA, and as of yet - no one has been released who is presently detained for a technical violation.

The DOC usually affords residents up to ten days per month of good time credits. The institution has increased the potential allotment to twenty as a result of the emergency legislation; however, only DC Superior Court and the US Attorney’s Office have the authority to release individuals, not the DOC.

## Conditions of Residents

DOC residents are currently confined to their cells for 23.5 hours a day. The residents are allowed thirty minutes a day to shower, use the phone, and clean their cells. Throughout the course of the day, residents who have detail jobs are working within the unit by wiping down metal surfaces, phones, and tables. Generally, all residents were initially allowed more time out of the cell, and recreation was facilitated by one whole tier at a time. This is no longer the case, which has caused a great deal of frustration for the population.

On Saturday, April 4, 2020, there was a riot in housing unit NW-2, because residents wanted testing for COVID-19. Residents who were alleged to have participated in the riot were moved to a separate unit. The resident population is frustrated, and a large number believe they have a greater risk of exposure and may possibly die in DOC custody.

We also spoke to individuals from the first group quarantined as a consequence of exposure to the US Marshall who tested positive for COVID-19. According to two individuals, after their exposure to the US Marshall, they were never quarantined or tested, and were not sent to CTF until 8 days later. Both stated that they were still not tested at CTF; their temperatures were checked, and they were monitored.

***\*As of April 14, 2020, there are 27 positive cases of COVID-19 within the DOC.***