



Corrections Information Council | CIC

Recent Covid-19 Concerns at Volunteers of America Re-entry Center

Thursday, May 13, 2021

The CIC has received a number of concerns about Covid-19 outbreaks at the Volunteers of America Halfway House (VoA) in Baltimore over the last two months. The most recent reports suggest that some individuals who have tested positive for Covid-19 have been transferred to local hotels to quarantine, while other individuals have been furloughed out of the facility. It was not clear if the furloughs would be temporary and the residents would be required to return to VoA or if they would be allowed to transition to home confinement. The CIC also received reports that two individuals located at VoA died at the end of March, and that at least one of those individuals died from Covid-19 complications. Reportedly, neither of the deceased men was from Washington DC.

The CIC contacted the BOP regarding these concerns and asked for information about the Covid-19 situation at VoA, including where DC individuals are currently located, the number of Covid-19 cases in recent months, and the current protocols for addressing outbreaks of the virus.¹

Population and Location

The BOP indicated that 20 DC individuals are currently housed at the VoA facility. Another 107 DC individuals are on home confinement under the supervision of VoA staff. The BOP stated that 14 DC residents are currently on furlough from the facility, and that no DC individuals are currently being housed in hotels.

Covid-19 cases

The BOP informed the CIC that 6 DC individuals at VoA have tested positive for Covid-19 since March 1, 2021. The BOP stated that no DC individuals have died from Covid-19 or related complications during 2021.

Safety Protocols

The BOP stated that it has “temporarily slowed intake to allow the facility population to stay low.” The BOP did not provide details on how slowing intake is being implemented. The facility is requiring that all intakes have quarantined for at least 14 days prior to arrival at the facility and tested negative for Covid-19.²

¹ Volunteers of America RRC is contracted to provide re-entry services through the Bureau of Prisons Re-Entry Services Division. The CIC’s Memorandum of Understanding with the Bureau of Prisons requires that the CIC direct concerns to our liaison at BOP Central Office, rather than to the RRC directly.

² This matches the most recent guidance published by BOP for all transfers. See “Movement” section at https://www.bop.gov/coronavirus/covid19_status.jsp for details.

The BOP indicated that two women in the female dorm have been relocated, one to Fairview RRC and the other to home confinement. This is allowing the female dorm to be used as a quarantine area. A classroom has been designated as a waiting area for individuals entering the facility for new intakes, urinalysis, or transfer to hospital. Residents are on “modified movement” to and from the facility to minimize exposure.

Within the facility, the BOP stated that dorm rooms are limited to 5 or 6 residents to allow for distancing. The CIC’s understanding is that the capacity of each dorm room is 16 individuals. The computer room is also being limited to 5 people at a time to allow for distancing. Residents and staff are encouraged to wear masks at all times and to wash their hands frequently, and hand sanitizer stations have been placed around the facility. Staff and residents are having their temperatures checked daily, including individuals coming to VoA for urinalysis.