



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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NHDOC Employee Tests Positive for COVID-19

Concord, NH – The NH Department of Corrections learned late Friday that an employee who works out of the NH State Prison for Men had tested positive for COVID-19 on April 3, 2020, and is now quarantined at their home. This employee last worked in the facility March 25, 2020, and did not return until April 1, 2020, at which time the employee was denied entry based on the COVID-19 screening process and was directed to follow-up with their healthcare provider. That follow-up resulted in the positive test confirmation.

The screening process initiated by the Department March 17, 2020, is intended to keep individuals who exhibit signs and symptoms of COVID-19 from entering our facilities as part of a coordinated effort to keep staff and residents safe. This exemplifies the benefit that screening provides and the Department reports that as of the time of this release that no other staff or any residents have tested positive for COVID-19.

The NHDOC has engaged in several proactive measures since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Starting at the end of January, the NHDOC began screening visitors, volunteers and newly booked residents entering the facilities.

In the first week of March, the NHDOC implemented additional screening methods for visitors and volunteers and updated our screening tool for new resident intakes, parole violators and transfers based on the guidelines from the Center for Disease Control (CDC). We updated our staff screening to include a temperature check and visual check in addition to the screening form.

On March 16, visitation and volunteer services was suspended to prevent the introduction of COVID-19 to the facilities. This decision was not made lightly, but as Governor Sununu had declared a State of Emergency, it was the right decision for the protection of staff and residents.

Beginning in early March, all NHDOC facilities were engaged in additional sanitization measures above the already elevated measures in place due to cold and flu season. We ensured the disinfectant used in all our facilities - in addition to bleach - is effective against COVID-19.

The Department is promoting social distancing by reducing movement and transfer with other correctional institutions. If we have to transfer or receive someone, a screening must occur, including a temperature check, prior to arrival on the day of the transfer.

Information is regularly distributed to staff and residents because consistent and clear communication is critical.

NHDOC leadership is constantly reevaluating and adjusting our procedures as necessary to follow guidance as outlined by the CDC.

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