

DJJ RESPONSE TO COVID-19 SUMMARY SHEET-- 8/10/20

Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Juvenile Justice facilities and offices are following recommendations from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Alaska Division of Public Health, and local health departments to prevent and respond to Coronavirus (COVID-19) infection. The Division's leadership is actively monitoring the COVID-19 outbreak and implements recommendations from health officials to update DJJ procedures as appropriate. The following is a summary of actions taken by DJJ during this crisis:

Social Distancing, Cleaning, and Hygiene

- DJJ has reevaluated every referral to ensure that the least restrictive appropriate placement is utilized in lieu of DJJ's secure facilities. In some cases, this has resulted in a population reduction in DJJ detention units.
- Facilities and offices have implemented four disinfecting cleanings per day on frequently used surfaces.
- Frequent and regular handwashing is mandated for staff and youth.
- Absent safety/security concerns, staff and youth are practicing "social distancing" in DJJ facilities and offices.
- Activities, including recreation time and programs, have been modified to provide the minimum 6-foot distance between participants. All equipment is cleaned and sanitized before and after each individual use.
- DJJ staff and youth are all utilizing face coverings to prevent the spread of COVID-19. All staff and youth must use a face covering outside of personal rooms or offices.
- Telephonic or Zoom visits are available for families, volunteers, attorneys, and others.

Health Screenings of Staff and Youth

- Staff are asked to stay home if they are exhibiting symptoms of illness.
- Staff are screened daily, before entering the facility or probation office. If symptoms are identified during daily entry screening, staff are sent home pending resolution of symptoms and/or testing.
- All new juvenile admits to the facility are screened for COVID-19 symptoms. If a youth exhibits COVID-19 symptoms or discloses close contact, the facility implements youth quarantine procedures pending testing or resolution of symptoms. Since 4/28/20, all new admits receive COVID-19 testing regardless of symptomology. Youth are quarantined until their results are returned and further response will be based on the outcome of their test.

Response to Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 cases

- As soon as a youth develops symptoms of COVID-19, they are required to wear a medical grade mask and are immediately placed under medical isolation in a separate environment from other individuals or as instructed by local public health authorities.
- Facilities immediately implement the Medical Isolation protocol and appropriate medical treatment services.
- DJJ is working with public health officials for priority testing and expedited results for DJJ facilities.

Mental Health Services:

- DJJ Mental Health Clinicians provide in person crisis management, suicide risk assessment, and lead support groups for youth in facilities.
- Clinicians also provide telephonic and Zoom based counseling sessions with youth and their families.

Communication:

- DJJ Website is updated as new information occurs.
- Regular communication with parents and guardians. Zoom visitation information posted to the DJJ website.
- Ongoing manager meetings with meeting minutes distributed to all staff.

Summary of Chronological Steps taken by DJJ:

7/6/20- DJJ began lifting the suspension visitation for families, attorneys and others. Individual DJJ facilities' visiting protocols are based upon local community COVID-19 alert levels. The division's Phase I-II visiting protocols are available on the DJJ website.

4/28/20- DJJ began performing COVID-19 tests on new youth admissions regardless of symptomology. New admissions are quarantined from the general facility population until their results are returned and 14 days have passed without symptoms.

4/16/20- DJJ staff member who had tested positive for COVID-19 has recovered and returned to work.

4/10/20- DJJ was able to confirm that all Coronavirus tests conducted of DJJ staff and youth on 4/6/20 are negative. Impacted staff were cleared to return to work.

4/10/20- Updated entry screening and essential/critical worker guidance.

4/9/20- DJJ universal face covering protocol implemented for DJJ facilities and offices.

4/7/20 – DJJ administrative/probation staff deemed appropriate for telework are no longer working in DJJ facilities.

4/6/20- On Saturday, April 4th a McLaughlin Youth Facility (MYC) staff member was confirmed positive for COVID-19. Staff and youth who had contact with the impacted staff received prioritized testing. Those staff were sent home on quarantine pending the outcome of testing.

4/1/20 – DJJ job recruitments are posted for additional Nursing positions needed for COVID-19.

3/31/20- Updated DJJ Screening / PPE use protocol.

3/27/20- DJJ expanded the suspension of visitation to religious volunteers and attorneys.

3/24/20- All DJJ facilities began to screen all employees and essential contractors at the start of every shift prior to entering a facility. Anyone not meeting screening criteria are not permitted into the facility.

3/23/20 – Non-essential medical appointments are evaluated for postponement.

3/16/20 – Probation Officer guidelines implemented regarding essential client contact including limiting in-person meetings with youth in DJJ facilities.

3/13/20- As per Health Mandate #1, DJJ suspended visitation and volunteer activities in an effort to prevent the spread of the virus within our facilities and into communities throughout Alaska. At this time attorney's and religious volunteers were allowed to enter the facilities once a health screening is conducted.

3/13/20: All new youth admissions or transfers to DJJ facilities began being screened for COVID-19. DJJ nursing staff are available at facilities to meet the needs of any youth exhibiting signs of the virus.

3/13/20: DJJ announced the beginning of efforts to protect our facilities residents, employees and contractors from COVID-19. DJJ increased sanitation of facility units, communal areas and general public points of entry. Youth and employees have received increased education and messaging of the importance of handwashing and social distancing.