

MEDIA ADVISORY

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS, REHABILITATION AND REENTRY

COVID-19 Management Strategy Update

March 18, 2020

(PHOENIX) – The Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry (ADCRR) has taken and is taking the following immediate preemptive and precautionary actions as part of its ongoing COVID-19 Management Strategy to protect the health and safety of its employees and the inmates in its care. These are ADCRR’s latest proactive measures to defend against the potential spread of the COVID-19 virus. They will not be the last.

While the threat of COVID-19 is new, ADCRR has for decades developed and implemented plans to manage incidents of infectious disease in a correctional environment involving inmates who are often medically fragile. ADCRR’s robust infectious disease protocols are continuously tested with new inmate admissions involving tuberculosis or symptoms associated with the common flu, scabies, chicken pox, or other droplet or airborne spread infectious disease. ADCRR is one of the only non-hospital settings with negative pressure rooms to treat and isolate those with airborne infectious diseases.

“The health and safety of our staff and inmates at the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry is our paramount concern,” said David Shinn, Director of ADCRR. “In managing this situation, our two top priorities are safety and public health as we work to mitigate the potential spread of COVID-19 within our prisons.”

ADCRR has implemented and is implementing the following measures to defend against the spread of the COVID-19 virus:

- While ADCRR currently has no confirmed cases of the COVID-19 virus, Director David Shinn has taken proactive measures to protect the public safety and well-being of all ADCRR employees and inmates by suspending contact and non-contact legal and non-legal visitation of inmates throughout the prison system.
- Effective immediately, a \$4-copay that inmates pay for health care services is being waived for those who are experiencing flu or cold-like symptoms.
- Until such time as the COVID-19 Emergency Declaration has expired, ADCRR will provide free hand soap to all inmates upon request, effective immediately. As recommended by ADHS, **frequent handwashing remains the preferred method of virus prevention.**
- Effective immediately, ADCRR has stopped all routine internal movement of inmates across all Arizona Prison Complexes. Specialty needs for inmate movements will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. External medical needs will continue based on provider availability.

- Effective yesterday, all inmate classes provided by local community colleges are suspended.
- Effective this week, Wardens at each Arizona prison complex are initiating a weekly deep cleaning of all facilities. Wardens are also taking part in regular ongoing meetings with ADCRR leadership to ensure robust availability of soap, paper towels, hygiene items, and cleaning agents for both inmates and staff.
- Effective immediately, ADCRR is requiring all employees entering Arizona prison complexes to undergo an Infectious Disease Symptoms Check that includes a series of health questions. In partnership with ADCRR's inmate healthcare vendor, Centurion, ADCRR staff will be checked for symptoms of COVID-19 continuously as they enter each facility. Inmate work crews are already being screened as they depart and re-enter all prison complex facilities.
- On Monday, CenturyLink, ADCRR's phone and internet provider, began offering inmates two 15-minute phone calls per week at no charge, in addition to the existing phone call and written letter privileges. Thus far, CenturyLink has reported that 6,339 free calls have been made on the system. ADCRR is grateful for CenturyLink's recognition of this public health emergency and its generous response to lessen the burden on staff and inmates alike. ADCRR is exploring potential video visitation options so that inmates may remain in close contact with family members.

Following guidelines consistent with the Arizona Department of Health Services, ADCRR continues to communicate with staff and inmates about how they can reduce the risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus, including washing hands, sanitizing surfaces, covering coughs and sneezes, and encouraging employees to stay home if they are sick. ADCRR also will continue to provide updates on additional COVID-19 measures being taken to protect the safety and well-being of its staff and the inmates. For the latest regarding ADCRR's COVID-19 management strategy, please also visit:

<https://corrections.az.gov/>.

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