

Mayor Lyda Krewson

Corrections Task Force

Recommendation Relating to Out of Cell Recreation and Program Restrictions

Passed 3/4/2021.

Transmitted to Mayor Krewson, Director Edwards and Commissioner Glass on 3/4/2021

Corrected 3/5/2021

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Situation

At the recommendation of the CDC and the City Health Department early in the epidemic detainees were, and are still currently, restricted to 45 minutes out of cell time twice daily. During this time, they must use their phone privilege (15 or 20 minutes), shower, cook food from the commissary, exercise and socialize. They are locked in their cells 22 hours per day. This is creating both mental and physical stress for both detainees and staff.

Background

The Department Corrections has put in place CDC recommendations and best practices that:

1. Quarantine all new admittees for 14 days.
2. Isolate detainees based on signs and symptoms.
3. Restrict movement among units.
4. Have daily nurse medication passes in each unit.
5. Test upon request.
6. Offer vaccine to high-risk individuals in compliance with Missouri allowed phases.
7. Ban guests, volunteers, and visitation.
8. Check temperatures of all persons entering the building.
9. Follow DOH restrictions for staff who have COVID19 before returning to work.

The CDC guidance states:

"Implement social distancing strategies to increase the physical space between incarcerated/detained persons (ideally 6 feet between all individuals, regardless of symptoms), **and to minimize mixing of individuals from different housing units.** Strategies will need to be **tailored** to the individual **space in the facility and the needs of the population and staff. Not all strategies will be feasible in all facilities.**

• **Recreation:**

1. Choose recreation spaces where individuals can spread out
2. Stagger time in recreation spaces (clean and disinfect between groups).
3. **Restrict recreation space usage to a single housing unit per space (where feasible)."**

Analysis

Measures put in place by City Correction's and approved by the City Health Director have successfully limited COVID19 among detainees to 2 outbreaks and 100 cases since March of 2020.

Detainees have been in the same unit with the same detainees for several months with outside exposure limited to staff.

Staff are screened for fever upon entering the building and are monitored for signs and symptoms.

Detainee interviews indicate a great deal of stress and anxiety is being created by being confined to their cells for 22 hours per day. Comments indicated it is a major contributing factor to the unrest and incidents that have happened.

Recommendation

Easing restrictions for out of cell time and program staff can substantially decrease the growing anxiety, unease and anger among detainees and minimize the potential of another uprising. As long as other COVID19 restrictions are maintained the risk of mental illness, anxiety and another uprising far outweighs the risk of COVID19

Recommendation #1. Keep all other provisions in place but allow detainees out of their cells for a minimum of 4 hours per day staggered as needed and as allowed under security guidelines. Re-install tables and chairs. Provide sanitizing materials. Continue the mask requirement.

Recommendation #2. Allow limited program volunteer access with proof of full vaccination and compliance with the 2-week immunity post vaccine requirement, e.g., ministers, teachers, social workers. Limit program activities to unit mates only. Provide sanitizing materials. Continue the mask requirement.

Recommendation #3. On a monthly basis monitor COVID19 cases and re-evaluate the changes.

