

News Release

CONTACT:

Todd Wivell
301-600-3653 Office
240-397-0255 Cell
twivell@frederickcountymd.gov



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

No COVID Cases for Inmates at Frederick County ADC *Risks Mitigated from the Onset of the Pandemic*

FREDERICK, Md. (Dec. 28, 2020) – From the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, in early 2020 through today, the Frederick County Adult Detention Center (ADC) has not had one inmate case of COVID while in confinement.

"The program is so successful here at the ADC because we started early and developed a plan with our correctional officers, leadership, and the local health department to mitigate risks to COVID-19," said Kathy Humbertson, Wellpath Regional Director of Nursing, contracted medical provider for the ADC. "In addition, we have had ongoing collaboration throughout the pandemic to ensure it remains pertinent to the current situation."

"I want to recognize and commend the entire ADC staff for their commitment and diligence in adhering to best practices and the rapidly changing restrictions to keep COVID out of the detention center and inmate population," said Frederick County Sheriff Chuck Jenkins. "The administrators, along with our medical providers, set strict policies and the correctional officers have diligently and successfully carried out these practices to date. Additionally, the inmates deserve credit for maintaining their own good sanitation practices."

From the start of the pandemic, the ADC has had a stringent plan for ensuring the disease stays out of the inmates housing areas. With the Frederick County Sheriff's approval, ADC leadership suspended all central booking on March 21, at a time when Maryland only had approximately 190 confirmed COVID cases. As part of this change, the arresting officer now calls the on-duty commissioner and they do an initial hearing over the phone. Once the commissioner issues a commitment, the officer takes the offender to the ADC for processing. Before COVID, the ADC averaged 300 central booking intakes a month and once this policy was established, the average intakes dropped to approximately 30 a month.

Once the offender arrives to the ADC, the next step in the mitigation process commences. The offender immediately receives a temperature check and completes a thorough COVID questionnaire. Once they complete their intake processing, correctional officers immediately place the offender into a 24-hour holding area. Within four hours of their intake, offenders receive a full Receiving Screening from a Wellpath nurse. These screenings include a full medical history, vitals, height/weight, any specific medical needs, medications, pregnancy tests for women, suicide risk assessments, and another COVID questionnaire. Once all of this is complete, the nurse schedules the offender for a 14-day follow up.

After the 24-hour hold is over, correctional officers move the offender to a quarantined area of the ADC where they stay in quarantine for a period of 14 days. During this timeframe, they receive a temperature check and symptom screening twice a day from a Wellpath nurse. Once they complete this 14-day quarantine and show no signs or symptoms of COVID, they can go into the general population.

If at any time during this process, an offender starts to experience COVID symptoms, correctional officers will take them to the ADC medical unit and places them in a negative pressure isolation room, where

nursing staff and medical providers constantly monitor them. Wellpath trained providers administer on-site COVID testing that is processed within a 48-72 turnaround time. Additionally, the medical provider tests all inmates who must leave the campus for medical services or other programs.

By mid-March, six days after the first cases of COVID hit the local community, other preventive measures included the cancellation of all in-person visitations, a review of all essential and non-essential personnel, Skype visits for attorneys, possible telehealth options for mental health, and decontaminating the ADC through the use of an approved chemical fogger on a scheduled basis. Furthermore, anyone entering the ADC receives a temperature check and must wear a mask, including all inmates.

"Our success is a direct result of the effort of our staff to follow and enforce all of the ever-changing procedures related to this virus," said Maj. Michael Cronise, FCSO Assistant Corrections Bureau Chief. "Even though we are not considered 'front-line' staff, the superb performance of the Corrections Bureau personnel and Wellpath staff handling this pandemic cannot be overlooked."

The Frederick County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) is a full-service law enforcement agency; an arm of the court, and a keeper of offenders. In this regard, it exists to serve the more than 250,000 citizens of Frederick County with respect, fairness, and compassion. FCSO is committed to the prevention of crime; the protection of life and property; the preservation of peace and order; the enforcement of laws and ordinances; the safeguarding of constitutional guarantees; and safekeeping of prisoners. The men, women, and officers of this office nurture public trust by holding themselves to the highest standards of performance and ethics. The FCSO is located at 110 Airport Drive East, Frederick, MD, 21701. Visit www.frederickcosherriff.com for more information.

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