



State of Vermont
Department of Corrections
280 State Drive
Waterbury, VT 05671-1000

Agency of Human Services

For Immediate Release:

Press Contact: Jim Baker
Commissioner, Dept. of Corrections
James.Baker@vermont.gov

Inmate at NWSCF Tests Positive for COVID-19

Corrections takes additional steps at all facilities to isolate inmates, protect staff and slow the spread

Waterbury, Vt., April 8, 2020 – The Vermont Department of Corrections has confirmed that an inmate at the Northwest State Correctional Facility (NWSCF) in Swanton, Vt. has tested positive for COVID-19. The inmate began showing symptoms early Monday morning and was immediately tested and placed in the negative pressure cell at NWSCF awaiting test results. This is the first known positive inmate case at a Vermont correctional facility. Three staff members have tested positive at the facility.

“We have been very focused on protecting staff and inmates, and are moving quickly to increase testing and put in place even more measures to reduce contact,” said James Baker, Commissioner, Vermont Department of Corrections. “We have been planning for this from the outset of the pandemic and will continue to adjust as we learn more.”

All inmates and staff at NWSCF will immediately be tested over the next 24 hours. The rapid response Epi team, working with DOC medical staff, will conduct a thorough contact tracing of the recent positive staff and inmate at NWSCF so that additional isolation measures can be taken if appropriate.

NWSCF remains on a full facility lock down as was announced earlier this week in a continued effort to further mitigate exposure risks for both staff and inmates. On Monday, April 6 all staff and inmates at the facility were issued masks to wear at all times.

All facilities have been placed in a modified lockdown. The modified lockdown is a preventative measure to mitigate any potential spread of the virus. Inmates will receive meals in their cells and be provided out of cell recreation time in small numbers. Additionally, masks will be delivered to all facilities and used by staff and inmates beginning Thursday, April 9.

From the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Corrections has taken steps to reduce exposure including immediately suspending in-person visits and moving to video visits, reducing the total number of inmates, conducting temperature checks for staff, staging PPE and other equipment to aid in protecting staff and inmates.

As of today, there are 199 inmates at NWSCF and 1,435 inmates statewide.

###

www.corrections.vermont.gov

