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Agency of Human Services

For Immediate Release

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Vermont Department of Corrections Staff Confirmed Positive for COVID-19

Waterbury, Vt., April 1, 2020 – The Vermont Department of Corrections announced today a second positive case of COVID-19 for a staff member employed at the Northwest State Correctional Facility in Swanton, Vt. The staff person was last in the facility on Wednesday, March 25, 2020 and did not have symptoms at that time. The staff member had limited interactions with the inmate population. DOC is following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and the Vermont Department of Health to identify contacts of the staff member. Guidance recommends that people who came into contact within 48 hours of showing symptoms should be quarantined. There was no contact within the facility in the 48-hour window, as the staff did not exhibit symptoms until March 29 and has not been in the facility since March 25. The department respects the privacy of staff and will not provide information that could lead to the identification on any staff member.

“My concern remains with the health and safety of our staff and the people in our care,” said Interim Corrections Commissioner Jim Baker. “We are taking every effort to limit exposure.”

With guidance from the Health Department, the DOC implemented immediate steps to further protect the employees and inmates at the facility. These steps include a deep cleaning of the areas where the staff member worked and increased messaging to staff and inmates about hand washing and hygiene. All staff entering a correctional facility are screened for symptoms, including a fever. Staff who present with symptoms are sent home in line with the guidance from the Department of Human Resources and instructed to contact their primary care provider.

At this time no inmate has tested positive for COVID -19.

Northwest State Correctional Facility has staff of 123 and an inmate population of 197. The overall population for all facilities is 1,463 today.

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