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For Immediate Release:

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Vermont Department of Corrections COVID-19 Update

Staff member employed at the Northern State Correctional Facility tests positive for COVID-19; policy of prohibiting all in-person visitation and volunteer services is in effect until further notice

Waterbury, Vt., March 23, 2020 – The Vermont Department of Corrections announced a positive case of COVID-19 for a staff member employed at the Northern State Correctional Facility in Newport, Vt. This staff member did not have access to the secure portion of the facility where the inmate population is housed. The staff member last worked on Tuesday, March 17 and the Department has obtained a list of all staff who had contact with the individual on their last day of work.

“The department is extending our support to this staff member in light of this news,” said Corrections Commissioner Jim Baker. “We respect the health care privacy of our staff and will not provide information that could lead to the identification of any staff member who may contract COVID19.”

With guidance from the Department of Health, 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 inmates have tested positive for COVID-19.

Northern State Correctional Facility has 128 staff and an inmate population of 402. The overall population for all six facilities is 1,567 today. This is a decrease of 89 inmates since March 16, 2020.

Further, the policy prohibiting all in-person visitation and volunteer services effective on March 14, remains in effect for all facilities until further notice. GTL (the video visitation and communication provider for the Department) continues to offer one free video visitation as well as two free 5-minute calls per week to all inmates within the system.

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