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## **For Immediate Release**

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## **ONLINE SUPPORT PORTAL FOR INMATE FAMILIES AND FRIENDS ESTABLISHED**

*Vermont Department of Corrections enhances communications, transparency for community*

Waterbury, Vt., April 16, 2020 – The Vermont Department of Corrections is establishing a new online portal specifically for family and friends of inmates. This portal will allow loved ones to contact the Department with questions and quickly receive responses. The new portal enhances the level of service the Department provides to the community.

Family and friends of inmates in Vermont’s six facilities, and those housed out of state, are invited to submit questions to the Department by visiting the Family and Friends page on the Department’s website (<https://doc.vermont.gov/information-inmate-families-and-friends>) and submitting [the online form](#). A representative from the Department will review the form and contact each person individually within one business day of receiving their message.

“In this high-stress time, it’s more important than ever for the Department to quickly and compassionately address the many concerns people have about the safety of their loved ones,” said Interim Commissioner Jim Baker. “The entire team at the Department is working around the clock to ensure the health and safety of our inmates and officers. Quickly communicating with inmates’ family and friends is way to both acknowledge that work and provide peace of mind to everyone involved in the system.”

The Department encourages people who have a loved one in a correctional facility to use this new portal to access information. The portal will directly link loved ones with the team dedicated to assisting family and friends, both during the COVID-19 pandemic and afterwards.

The Department is also making regular updates to [the website’s “Frequently Asked Questions” page](#). The FAQ ensures information can be quickly shared with the greater community. Along with answers to common questions, the FAQ page includes up-to-date policies and procedures at Vermont’s six facilities.

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