

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

Agency of Human Services

May 26, 2023

Team,

On May 11, 2023, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention officially ended the COVID-19 federal health emergency. As the country moves out of the pandemic, many businesses and communities are easing out of the protocols employed over the last three years. Highly effective vaccines and medical treatments now greatly reduce the threat of COVID-19, meaning certain mitigation measures are no longer necessary.

Recognizing this, the impacts of mitigation efforts, and a very human need to return to normalcy, the Department is formally ending emergency management of COVID-19. Going forward, COVID-19 will be managed like other infectious illnesses. As with other communicable diseases, the Department will use testing and medical treatment when medically indicated and deploy precautionary measures when infection is detected.

Please see the attached updated infectious disease protocol. This protocol more closely aligns with the medical landscape of Vermont's correctional facilities today and prepares us to adjust to new medical realities facing incarcerated individuals in Vermont. Relatedly, the COVID Response Team will also disband.

I recognize that moving out of this emergency phase may be uncomfortable for some. These measures protected us over the past three years and a return to normal presents uncertainty. I encourage you to use our Department's Peer Support Team and lean on each other as we take this step forward.

This Department managed one of the most effective responses in the country. In the face of an unprecedented global emergency, you demonstrated incredible professionalism, adaptability, and respect. And, as a result, Vermont is the only state where no staff or incarcerated individual died within correctional facilities as a result of COVID-19. **I can think of no better testament to your commitment to the mission of this Department, our staff, and those we serve.**

Warm Regards,

Nicholas J. Deml
Commissioner