



Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

Office of the Secretary

300 East Joppa Road • Suite 1000 • Towson, Maryland 21286-3020
(410) 339-5000 • FAX (410) 339-4240 • TOLL FREE (877) 379-8636 • V/TTY (800) 735-2258 • www.dpscs.maryland.gov

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April 1, 2020

Marsden McGuire, M.D., President
Maryland Psychiatric Society, Inc.
1101 St. Paul Street, Suite 305
Baltimore, MD 21201

Dear President McGuire & Members of the Maryland Psychiatric Society,

Thank you for your concern and collaboration as we all work to address the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Maryland's focus is on maintaining good public health practices to 'flatten the curve' and to stand up and expand the state's emergency response and medical care capacity to serve those in need.

The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) has been working in tandem with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and Maryland Emergency Management Agency for weeks to ensure the health and wellbeing of the prison population. The Department has implemented best practices across the agency to prevent and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 by:

- Enhancing hygiene and sanitation practices consistent with the recommendations of Maryland Department of Health and the Centers of Disease Control
- Suspending visitation and volunteer-led programs at all correctional facilities, excluding legal visits
- Conducting temperature checks and completing health questionnaires for staff at every shift change
- Modifying inmate movement and meal service to more closely align with social distancing protocols (implemented "Grab N Go" dining at most correctional facilities)
- Ensuring an adequate supply of cleaning, safety and other operational-critical supplies for all facilities
- Waiving all inmate medical co-pays

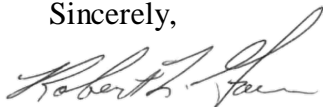
- Ensuring those privatized medical doctors and nurses who provide on-site care to the inmate population at infirmaries in each region are prepared
- Providing extra soap at no cost to all inmates
- Rolling out video visitation, where possible so inmates can better connect with loved ones
- Providing five free, 15-minute phone calls a week for all inmates as a means of keeping incarcerated men and women closely connected to their loved ones during this challenging time
- Extending recreation periods for inmates while suspending contact sports
- Establishing a 24-hour family hotline so that loved ones of incarcerated men and women can receive COVID-19 related information around the clock (see attached)
- Increasing communication to staff; Secretary Robert Green is communicating messages to his thousands of employees multiple times a week; employees are also receiving operational updates daily

The Department is aware of the importance of ensuring continuity of medical and mental health treatment of its incarcerated population, both in the correctional setting and as offenders are reentering into society.

The coronavirus pandemic has created a challenging situation for many service providers, shelters, employers and other agencies who serve returning citizens. Despite these challenges, over the past 30 days, DPSCS has safely released a total of 1,455 inmates from its care, custody, and control. While DPSCS has limited discretion in the commitment and release of the incarcerated population, the Department continues to facilitate the release process through the avenues provided in statute.

DPSCS is taking extra precautions to ensure successful reentry and connection to community resources while also limiting exposure to COVID-19.

Sincerely,



Robert L. Green
Secretary

Cc: W.F. "Pete" Landon, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor
Secretary Robert R. Neall, MDH

