



Corrections and Community Supervision

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents
Bureau Chiefs
Division Heads

FROM: John Morley, MD, Deputy Commissioner/Chief Medical Officer

DATE: March 18, 2020

SUBJECT: Novel Coronavirus - COVID-19 Update

COVID-19 is in our communities – and is all around us. We must change our daily routines and expectations. Social Distancing is an absolute requirement to contain the spread. We need to avoid handshakes and minimize direct contact whenever possible and keep six feet apart whenever and wherever possible. The CDC and the Governor have issued guidelines on the maximum size of gatherings in order to reduce exposures.

While this is happening, we must continue DOCCS core responsibilities - Care, Custody, Control and Community Supervision.

Guidance from both CDC and NYS DOH continues to evolve, however, the basic principles have not changed at all.

People who are sick – have a communicable disease such as influenza or COVID-19 – must stay at home and avoid contact with others.

Anyone with a new cough, fever, chills and shortness of breath needs to consult with their own physician. If that option is not available, you should go to an Urgent Care Center.

The virus is spread via droplets and while it can be picked up from Fomites (objects or materials that can carry the virus – e.g. clothes, furniture) it is primarily spread from person to person from coughing and sneezing and the recipient spreading it to their face. The virus enters the body through mucous membranes which is why you hear that you should keep your hands away from your mouth, nose and eyes as much as possible and use hand sanitizer containing alcohol routinely and frequently.

If you're not in range to be coughed or sneezed on, you won't be picking up the virus. It is not acquired by walking past someone unless they happen to cough or sneeze on you at the moment you are 'in range'. The risk of acquiring the virus is highest when in close proximity, for a prolonged time, to someone who has the virus. Anyone who comes into close proximity (less than 6 feet) of someone who tests positive for COVID-19 but is asymptomatic is subject to Mandatory Quarantine – which is monitored by the DOH. Alternatively, if a person has been near (but not less than 6 feet) someone who has the virus they are subject to Precautionary Quarantine (not monitored by DOH) – distance depending on whether it occurs indoor or outdoor.

Any employee experiencing symptoms that could be associated with COVID-19 shall immediately report symptoms to their supervisor. Their supervisor, in turn, will report the information on who the person is, what their Correctional Facility or Community Supervision office is and their contact information to the Corrections Command Center (CCC). The Command Center will in turn notify the Deputy Commissioner/Chief Medical Officer who will work with the Supervisor for Communicable and Infectious Disease Unit. The employee will be contacted by the Infection Control Nurse (ICN) to collect information on exposure, risk and track additional contacts. The employee will notify the ICN when testing for COVID-19 is done and when results are available.

The issue of Quarantine will be assessed by the Health Department and the employee's physician and again the DOCCS ICN will be notified.

The ICN will order cleaning of any workspace used by the employee that could potentially be contaminated with COVID-19 once the employee has left the office.