



STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION
Office of the Commissioner
245 McKee Road
Dover, Delaware 19904

Claire DeMatteis
Commissioner

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March 16, 2020

Karen Lantz, Esquire
ACLU Delaware
Legal and Policy Director
100 West 10th Street
Suite 706
Wilmington, DE 19801

VIA EMAIL, USPS

Dear Ms. Lantz,

Thank you for your letter of March 13, 2020 regarding the Delaware Department of Correction's response to COVID-19. In response to the specific issues you raised, the DOC has implemented extensive screening and medical COVID-19 protocols. The DOC has been focused on preventing the spread of this new coronavirus for months. Significantly, the Delaware DOC has prevented a flu outbreak in all of our Level 4 and 5 facilities for the past three years. We are committed to implementing protective measures for inmates and officers to prevent widespread contamination of COVID-19 in DOC facilities.

Regarding increased telephone and video visitation for offenders, please note our announcement copied herein on Monday, March 16th. In addition, we are working to install video conference visitation capability at HRYCI and SCI by the end of this month.

Finally, regarding hand sanitizers, inmates have access on every tier to soap and water and there are hand sanitizers located on every tier, in chow areas and the infirmary.

Let's please keep the lines of communication open during this healthcare crisis. I am in DOC facilities and probation offices daily to monitor the precautions we have put in place.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Claire M. DeMatteis". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Claire M. DeMatteis
Commissioner

cc: The Hon. Kathleen Jennings, Esquire
Brendan O'Neill, Esquire
Jacqueline Mette, Esquire
Romain Alexander

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 16, 2020

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NEWS RELEASE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

Commissioner Claire DeMatteis

Department of Correction offers free inmate call time to facilitate community support during coronavirus response

Dover, DE – Effective today, the DOC and GTL, the Department’s vendor that provides inmate phone and video visitation services, are providing two free five-minute phone calls per week to all inmates at every Level V prison and Level IV Violation of Probation and Work Release facility. These free calls are being provided through the end of March to facilitate communication between individuals in DOC custody and their families [as the Department temporarily suspends in-person visitation as a precaution to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus Covid-19](#) to its facilities.

“We know that family and community support is important to the wellbeing of the individuals in our custody, and even as we take necessary precautions to reduce the risk of coronavirus entering our facilities, we are taking steps to keep inmates connected with their families,” **Commissioner Claire DeMatteis said.** “That includes offering free call time each week to keep open the lines of communication between inmates and their loved ones.”

The Department of Correction offers a variety of phone and video visitation, and while visitation is suspended, the DOC will increase the use of video visitation as available. Inmates in DOC facilities initiate phone and video calls through pre-paid accounts managed by GTL. Family members can [add funds to these account by phone, online](#) or in kiosks located in DOC facilities. DOC strongly encourages family members at this time to add funds by using the online portal or by phone to help reduce the risk of community spread of coronavirus.

Along with the temporary suspension of in-person visitation, the DOC continues to take other measures, including enhanced screening of all those entering its facilities, to minimize the risk of community spread of the coronavirus to DOC facilities.

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