

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-Office Communication

**DATE:** May 20, 2020

**TO:** Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Interim Director, Department of Health and Human Services  
*Prepared by: Mark Mertens, Division of Youth & Family Services Administrator*

**SUBJECT:** **An informational report from the Interim Director, Department of Health and Human Services, on measures to protect youth and staff in the Vel R. Phillips Youth Detention Center from COVID-19 infection**

To date, there have been no positive cases of COVID-19 among youth or staff in the Detention Center. The daily census in the facility has averaged around 62, which is approximately 10 fewer youth per day than prior to the pandemic. Some of the precautions that are being taken within the facility include:

- Enforcement of an order from the Chief Judge prohibiting the placement of any subjects in secure custody solely as the result of a misdemeanor warrant.
- A health screen including a temperature check and symptom questionnaire is administered for all new admissions. If youth are showing symptoms at intake, law enforcement is directed to take the youth for testing to Children's Hospital with results in 16 hours.
- Two pods (units) in Detention have been designated for new admissions to monitor the youth for symptoms within the first seven days. The Medical Department sees youth daily and monitors the temperature of all youth in the two assessment pods.
- DYFS is working closely with the court system and Public Defender's Office to determine whether youth can safely be released, with special consideration for youth with chronic illnesses or other vulnerabilities.
- Programming schedules remain intact to make sure youth are not isolated and kept busy. Much of the programming is being delivered remotely.
- Family and professional visits are conducted via Zoom, Facetime, and phone. Private rooms are set up for confidential calls with attorneys and therapists.
- Youth are tested for the virus at Children's Hospital if they are showing symptoms at any point in their stay.
- Proper social distancing is being practiced by youth and staff.

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) equipment is readily available for everyone. Youth Correctional Officers (YCOs) are wearing masks on the pods and throughout the building.
- Proper hygiene including regular hand washing is being practiced.
- The facility is being disinfected multiple times a day by youth, staff and a contracted cleaning agency. Professional sanitization of pods occurs weekly.

**Recommendation**

This report is informational and no action is required.



Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Interim Director  
Department of Health and Human Services

cc: County Executive David Crowley  
Hon. Mary E. Triggiano, Chief Judge  
Mary Jo Meyers, County Executive's Office  
County Supervisor Supreme Moore-Omokunde  
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