

DATE: January 20, 2022
TO: Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
FROM: Office of the Sheriff
RE: **Written Report Accompanying Presentation to the Committee on Judiciary, Safety, and General Services**

In late December 2021 and early January 2022, the Milwaukee County Jail experienced a significant COVID-19 outbreak. The outbreak spread rapidly within the facility in a manner reflective of the highly virulent omicron variant that has increasingly predominated COVID-19 spread nationwide. Despite the implementation and maintenance of strict protocols, internal case numbers rose significantly, reaching 417 at one point among occupants alone. The following chart shows a progression of case numbers prior to the peak of occupant cases within the jail.

Date	Positive Cases (Occupants)
December 10	5
December 24	31
December 29	147
January 4	254
January 6	364
January 7	417
January 10	206

During this period, the jail experienced extraordinary operational challenges. Compounded by existing short-staffing (reduced to approximately 47% at the height of the outbreak with as many as 36 of 161 available officers out due to COVID-19), staffing dropped precipitously. A concurrent outbreak at the facility responsible for preparing the jail’s hot meals and clean linens resulted in significant and very challenging delays in the delivery of both services to the jail. And the implementation of strict and often unpopular precautions (related both to public health mitigation as well as operational security), to include the extension of occupants’ time in their cells, created significant frustration among jail occupants. From December 25 to January 10 alone, cell toilets were flooded on 188 occasions, reflecting this high degree of frustration and creating a very significant sanitation challenge. The jail addressed each of these challenges diligently and transparently.

As of today, January 20, 2022, the COVID-19 outbreak at the Milwaukee County Jail has shown signs of a sustained downward trend. The following statistics are current as of this morning:

COVID-Positive Occupants	76
COVID-Positive Jail Employees	11
Total Occupants	859

Strict preventive measures remain in place within the jail facility, to include:

- **Rigorous screening and testing protocols:** Occupants continue to be rigorously screened for COVID-19 exposure and symptoms prior to admission to the facility and are tested immediately upon entry. Occupants are tested every two weeks (as are staff) ensuring the jail's ability to properly classify COVID-negative and COVID-positive occupants.
- **Masking protocols and availability:** Occupants are required to wear surgical masks or higher-grade masks when outside their cells. Occupants have been provided with KN-95s and a box of KN-95s and another box of surgical masks are on hand in all housing units.
- **Isolation and quarantine protocols:** Occupants who test positive for COVID-19 are transferred to isolation housing units. Occupants in housing units in which fellow occupants have tested positive for COVID-19 are placed on quarantine status. Ten-day requirements remain in place for occupants.
- **Mealtime safety precautions:** All occupants are eating meals in their cells until further notice. This is a significant shift from customary practice and took effect on December 22, as case numbers in the jail increased.