



Milwaukee County
House of Correction
Office of the Sheriff

DATE: November 12, 2021

TO: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Board of Supervisors

FROM: Chantell Jewell, Superintendent, House of Correction
Theodore Chisholm, Chief of Staff, Office of the Sheriff

CC: Membership, Committee on Health Equity and Human Needs
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Board of Supervisors
Steve Cady, Director of Research and Policy, Office of the Comptroller
Steve Gorodetskiy, Strategic Initiatives Director, DHHS

RE: Joint Report on Vaccination Incentive Program Efficacy

In Resolution 21-632, the Board of Supervisors requested that the House of Correction and Office of the Sheriff return a joint report on the efficacy of Milwaukee County's in-custody vaccination incentive program in the December 2021 committee cycle. This report fulfills this request and serves as the joint recommendation of the House of Correction and Office of the Sheriff that the in-custody vaccination incentive program be continued into 2022.

Pursuant to Resolution 21-632, \$50 in incentive funding have been provided to each resident of the House of Correction and occupant of the County Jail who has received an initial dose of an authorized vaccine on or after August 9, 2021, the date on which Resolution 21-632 became effective.

Since this date, 140 residents of the House of Correction have received incentive funding and 85 occupants of the County Jail have received incentive funding. Both facilities experienced relatively high levels of fully vaccinated persons in custody in the weeks following the introduction of the vaccination incentive program. On August 30, 51% (293 of 577) of House of Correction residents were fully vaccinated, and on September 1, 49% (409 of 840) of County Jail occupants were fully vaccinated. Due in large part to population turnover in both facilities, these numbers were slightly lower than numbers documented earlier in August, prior to the introduction of the vaccination incentive funding: on August 2, 60% (336 of 559) of House of Correction residents had been fully vaccinated, and on August 4, 55% (459 of 838) of County Jail occupants had been fully vaccinated.

Even so, the introduction of the vaccination incentive generated interest among residents and occupants and likely helped sustain vaccination levels at a reasonably high rate into September – on September 27, 52% (305 of 587) of House of Correction residents were vaccinated, and on October 11, 58% (313 of 542) of residents were vaccinated. Although this number declined to 42% (236 of 560) of residents by October 24 before rebounding to 47% (260 of 553) of residents by November 11, this decline has likely been impacted by an increased number of Wisconsin Department of Corrections transfers accepted from the House of Correction during the month of October, which resulted in the outward transfer of many fully vaccinated persons in custody from both the House of Correction and the County Jail.

The number of fully vaccinated occupants at the County Jail experienced a decline from its highs of August and early September, dropping from 41% (338 of 815) of occupants on September 8 to 37% (304 of 812) of occupants on September 22 and 31% (248 of 800) of occupants on October 27. The jail experiences significantly higher daily population turnover than the House of Correction, with many occupants remaining in custody for only hours or days, which may be a significant factor in this decline. The jail also, for many months, had housed a significant number of individuals committed to Department of Corrections custody and likely found its percentages of fully vaccinated occupants impacted by these transfers, as well. Furthermore, County Jail recreation policies, which had previously authorized gymnasium access for fully vaccinated occupants, became more restrictive due to local increases in COVID-19 cases and shortages in agency staff, and as a collateral consequence eliminated an activity that may have inspired individual occupants to pursue vaccination.

Another factor likely impacting overall declines in fully vaccinated residents and occupants was the conclusion of the State of Wisconsin \$100 vaccination incentive program on September 19.

Although population levels fluctuate daily at both facilities, and with them the percentages of vaccinated and unvaccinated residents and occupants, at present 47% (260 of 553) of House of Correction residents and 29% (234 of 796) of County Jail occupants are fully vaccinated. These numbers suggest an ongoing need for the vaccination incentive program, but given that attitudes regarding vaccination desirability have hardened nationwide in recent weeks and months, even more intensive outreach will likely be required to facilitate greater program efficacy in 2022.

Both the House of Correction and County Jail have received support from Milwaukee County contractor Render in generating awareness of and engagement in the vaccination incentive program, and increased engagement with Render (and potentially with other county communications contractors engaged in similar work) is considered advisable at both facilities. Furthermore, both facilities are exploring measures to expand access to vaccination opportunities throughout the custodial process, including, at the County Jail, the initial booking and intake process.

It is furthermore the position of the House of Correction and Office of the Sheriff that any lawful mechanism that can be employed to maximize vaccination status within each facility should be pursued to the extent feasible. The surest way to COVID-safe facilities is to ensure the highest possible vaccination rates among residents and occupants. Therefore, the House of Correction and Office of the Sheriff recommend that the Board reauthorize the \$50 vaccination incentive program in 2022.