



March 20, 2020

Team TDOC,

I know you all are concerned about what may lie ahead in the coming days and weeks. Yes, these are uncertain times, but I want you to know that our agency is preparing in every way possible to ensure we continue our mission of operating safe and secure prisons and providing effective community supervision in order to enhance public safety.

To date, there have been no positive cases of COVID-19 among staff or inmates, but we should all take the potential spread seriously. Understand that we will get through this. TDOC is a strong organization filled with people who are skilled in dealing with emergency situations. Remember that you are experts in this field and you know how to handle unfolding events.

While every person in our department is essential, our number one priority right now is to support those of you working in our prisons and in the community. We want to make sure everything we do is laser-focused on your safety and providing you with the necessary support. We have taken a multi-disciplinary approach to response planning for COVID-19 including, but not limited to, the following:

- Enhanced screening of inmates at intake.
- Modified supervision strategies for probationers and parolees.
- Developed an escalating plan for isolation.
- Identification of alternative disinfection tools for correctional setting.
- Limited non-essential transfers/movements.
- Intensified disinfection activities.
- Continuous review of agency staff for priority public safety needs.
- Enhanced recruitment efforts.

You may have seen news reports about the impact an outbreak could have on prisons and jails, but I want you to focus on a message from Dr. Elizabeth Gondles of the American Correctional Association (ACA) who said, "Correctional professionals are first responders. And in my heart of hearts, our prison systems are on this."

Governor Bill Lee said history will remember fondly when leaders do the right thing, especially when it's hard. You are all leaders in varying aspects in this organization. Now, more than ever, is time for you to lead where you stand and work together. We will manage this situation together. Please follow all safety precautions for yourself and your families. As always, thank you for the sacrifices you make each day.

Sincerely,

Tony Parker  
Commissioner

TP:DC