**Department of Correction Mandatory Covid 19 Testing Program Frequently Asked Questions**

We understand that there are many questions about how the mandatory testing program. Below are answers to many of the questions that have been received. We expect that there will be many more questions and we will continue to update this FAQ as needed. If you do have questions that are not answered here, please raise up to your unit leader.

1. **Will inmates also be required to participate in the new mandatory testing?**
   1. *We will continue to test inmates are frequency that is based on CDC and DPH guidelines. Inmate testing will begin again in parallel with staff testing, it will not be mandatory but strongly encouraged. There are some logistical issues with the labs that are still being worked out related the inmate testing*
2. **Will outside volunteers, visitors, attorneys and venders be mandated to have testing prior to entering a correctional facility?** 
   1. *While visitors and others as above will not participate in the mandatory testing program, they will be subject to screening prior to entering a DOC facility.*
3. **If a staff member tests positive, where and who would conduct the follow up tests?**
   1. *Should a staff member test positive they may return to work when criteria are met; specifically:*
      1. *If they were symptomatic, they have to be free of fever (without medication), be experiencing improvement in respiratory symptoms and be 10 days post onset of symptoms; or,*
      2. *If they were asymptomatic they may return to work after 10 days from the positive test and not have developed any symptoms; or,*
      3. *Are free of fever (without medication), experiencing improvement in respiratory symptoms, and have a negative test result in two consecutive tests utilizing the same test utilized in the mandatory program (COVID-19 molecular assay for detection of SARS-CoV-2 RNA) that were at least 24 hours apart.*
         * *These tests may be completed at one of the scheduled testing events.*
4. **If an employee tests positive and their follow up test is beyond the allotted time given, does the employee have the ability to use ANY accrued timed to cover the days? Or will the agency cover the employee’s duration of absence with a positive test result?** 
   1. *Employees will need to use accrued time if they exceed the provided COVID 19 leave.*
5. **How does mandatory testing work for employees currently on workers’ comp, suspension, or any paid or unpaid extended leave?** 
   1. *Employees will need to complete a test provided at one of the testing events prior to returning to active status.*
6. **If an employee who has not utilized the original 14-day leave period tests positive and goes out for the quarantine period. If any time after the quarantine is complete and the employees' spouse or significant other tests positive, will the employee receive an additional 14 days of coverage?** 
   1. *If the employee has not used any COVID leave, then tests positive under mandatory testing, he/she will use initial allotment during that quarantine, there will be no new allotment thereafter.*
7. **Is there an extension date being placed on the hotel accommodations given the mandatory testing?** 
   1. *The hotel program has been recently extended through August 1*
8. **If an employee utilizes some COVID leave time intermittently (example 3 of the original 9 days for childcare) before the result of a positive test, can they utilize the remaining 6 childcare days after returning from work from paid quarantine?** 
   1. *No, in this example the three or four days will be allocated to the quarantine*
9. **Will only for union staff be included in the program?**
   1. *This is for all staff whose work includes time at DOC correctional facilities*
10. **How frequently will staff be tested?** 
    1. *All staff members will be tested within the two-month period beginning on July 17 and thereafter until everyone in the unit is testing negative.*
11. **I understand that all employees need to test at least once in the two-month mandatory testing program. Can an employee test more frequently if they desire?**
    1. *While any given employee will only be tested once during the mandatory testing period, they are always welcome to pursue a test on their own using a public testing site or through their personal physician.*
12. **If staff previously tested positive and have returned to work, will they be required to test again?** 
    1. *All staff will need to test again in the two-month period beginning on July 17, regardless of any prior results*
13. **Is this a rapid test? How long does it take to get results?** 
    1. *This is COVID-19 molecular assay for detection of SARS-CoV-2 RNA; it is a swab-based test and the results will be available within 48 hours of testing.*
14. **Is the additional leave capped at a 14-day period? What if individual continues to test positive?** 
    1. *Should a staff member test positive they will be provided with block leave for up to 14 days; if they do not meet the criteria to return to work within those 14 days, they will need to utilize their other accruals for any additional leave.*
15. **The original leave can now be taken intermittently. Is that also accurate for the additional leave?** 
    1. *This additional leave provision is specifically for individuals who test positive for the purposes of self-monitoring; this is limited to a 14-day block leave.*
16. **When will required staff testing be discontinued?** 
    1. *Staff testing for a specific unit will be discontinued when all staff in that unit are testing negative.*
17. **I understand that if the initial 14-day period was used, an additional leave period will be available.  For how many days is this additional period, how is it paid and how will it be coded?**
    1. *The additional paid leave will be coded as LOPD COVID 19 leave; we will communicate the override code shortly.*
18. **Is testing only mandated for staff that are contact traced?**
    1. *Testing is mandated for all staff working in our facilities. Contact tracing will be pursued with any staff who test positive to ensure that we are doing all that we can to identify exposure risk as close to the notification as possible.*
19. **Are per diem employees subject to mandatory testing?** 
    1. *Assuming that they are working in a correctional facility, yes, they will be participating in the mandatory testing*
20. **Would per diem employees would receive the 14 day COVID leave?**
    1. *Per diem employees will not be eligible for additional leave. Should they test positive they will not be allowed to return to work until they meet the criteria outlined above.*
21. **When will we commence testing?**
    1. *The testing program for DOC began on July 17, 2020*
22. **Are there religious exemption allowed for individuals regarding the COVID testing?**
    1. *As this is a public health crisis, we are mandating that all employees be tested in order to ensure the safety and health for everyone in the workplace. If an employee has a concern of a religious nature, that concern should be raised and resolved through human resources.*
23. **Will contractors be expected to be tested?**
    1. *If a contractor is regularly working in our correctional facilities, they will be participating the mandatory testing program.*
24. **Are there specific test sites, or requirements for test sites?**
    1. *The Comptroller has arranged for clearly defined testing protocols and has identified testing sites; all staff members are expected to participate in those testing events. In the event that they are not able to participate for an approved reason they may be directed to complete the test had another designated location.*
25. **If a staff member is tested previously on a voluntary basis, does this fulfill requirement?** 
    1. *Only tests completed July 17 and thereafter will count for participation in this program. The purpose of point prevalence testing is to take a snapshot of the facility during a defined time period, for this test cycle it is the two months beginning July 17.*
26. **Can a staff member test at a facility that he/she does not work at if it's closer to his/her home?** 
    1. *Unless otherwise directed or approved by management, all employees are expected to participate in the testing events at their location.*
27. **Where will the testing be conducted?**
    1. *Each DOC correctional facility will have specific testing events for their location. With the exception of the staff of Willard Cybulski CI, who will be testing at Carl Robinson CI and Northern CI who will be testing at Osborn CI; all staff will be testing at their assigned facility unless directed otherwise by management.*
28. **How will this impact new hires? Will they be tested prior to the start of the upcoming academy classes?** 
    1. *All employees will be tested and be approved to work full duty prior to beginning work in a correctional facility. This includes staff members who have been out of the workplace for any reason as well as any new hires or transfers.*
29. **If a staff member is not part of the mandatory program, but would like to be tested at one of these events, is that possible?**
    1. *If a staff member would like to participate in the program, they need to inform their human resources generalist and they will be added to the roster for their determined test site. At that point they will be considered part of the mandatory testing program.*
30. **What will happen if a staff member refuses to participate in the program?**
    1. *This is a mandatory testing program designed to keep everyone our agency as safe as we can in these difficult circumstances. To that end, employees who elect not to participate will immediately be placed on unpaid leave and will not be able to return to any paid status until they participate in the program or until everyone else in their work unit has tested negative.*