

# IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## MDOC COVID-19 Update

JACKSON – In an ongoing effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health and well-being of all within the system, the Mississippi Department of Corrections has provided masks to all inmates and correctional staff.

Gloves and additional soap are being provided. Hand sanitizer is also being made available to inmates and staff in strategic locations throughout the department’s facilities, including dining halls.

As of today, April 27, the number of inmates testing positive for COVID-19 remains at four with 21 inmates testing negative. Two of the positive cases have been at the Mississippi State Penitentiary and two have been at Winston-Choctaw County Regional Correctional Facility. A total of two tests are pending, with one at Marshall County Correctional Facility and one at Delta Correctional Facility.

“Our top priority is protecting the health and well-being of all within our system. Thanks to measures put in place at the very onset of the pandemic, such as suspending visitations and transfers, we have been fortunate that our numbers have not increased,” Interim Commissioner Tommy Taylor said. “By increasing the availability of masks and gloves, along with our ramped up sanitation procedures and other healthcare strategies, we are working to lessen the impact of COVID-19 on inmates and staff and protect their health. We are doing all we can to prevent further transmission during this unprecedented time.”

Masks for both inmates and staff have been obtained from the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and the Mississippi Prison Industries Corporation (MPIC). Inmates at Parchman also are using 5,000 masks donated from REFORM Alliance.

The department continues to review and improve its plans and procedures to slow the spread, while constantly consulting with state health officials and following Centers of Disease Control and Prevention and Mississippi State Department of Health guidelines. Updates on confirmed cases and other information will be posted daily on the MDOC website at <https://www.mdoc.ms.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

MDOC practices implemented at the onset of COVID-19 to slow the spread remain in effect, include:

- Suspending visitation, except for attorney visits, to limit exposure from people entering MDOC facilities.
- Screening employees daily when they report to work.

- Suspending inter-facility transfers, except in emergency cases.
- Posting signage throughout MDOC facilities and providing handouts to inmates listing the symptoms of COVID-19 and informing them of ways to protect themselves.
- Conducting extra cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, such as dining tables, light switches.
- Isolating any inmate tested or presenting symptoms of COVID-19.
- Quarantining any housing unit where sick or potentially sick individuals have had direct contact.