

# COVID-19 RESPONSE

A MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY KEVIN A. CARR



Friday, April 24, 2020

Hello. As Secretary of the Department, I want to take this opportunity to provide you with updates regarding the Department's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In light of everything going on right now with COVID-19, I am sure you all have many questions and concerns. For many of us, we are balancing adjustments to our daily lives with our family, friends and communities. Right now staff are juggling working extra hours in a modified environment, while navigating life through a pandemic, battling childcare issues and worrying about their loved ones. Yet you continue to show up each and every day with the same level of commitment and professionalism. None of us know what the next few months will look like, but I do know that it is critical to take care of yourself and your loved ones during this period of uncertainty. Please remember that 'you can't pour from an empty cup.' I need each of you to remain healthy and resilient in the months ahead.

As of the time I'm recording this message, we have 13 staff members and 10 persons in our care who have tested positive for COVID-19. Our Emergency Operation Center is fully operational and we're in close communication with the Office of the Governor and the Department of Health Services to help us respond to this crisis. Your safety is my priority. We have all heard about the nationwide shortage of PPE, especially masks. I continue to seek out and advocate for additional PPE for our staff. I am encouraging each of you to wear a cloth mask when a DOC issued mask is not available.

Every year we celebrate Correctional Employees Week in the first week of May. While this year may look a bit different, and our celebrations may be delayed, it will remain a time to reflect upon the professionalism, integrity and strength of our staff in environments that I know can be challenging. This COVID-19 crisis we are facing is a reminder of the commitment our staff have made to keep our communities and those in our care safe.

So to all the staff who are working tirelessly to provide critical services and adapt to the new and ever changing information – thank you. I appreciate each of you. Your knowledge, expertise and professionalism is valuable to our department and to the people of Wisconsin, and will be what makes us stronger as an agency and as a State after this is all over.