

# COVID-19 FACT SHEET AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Staying informed is an important part of responding to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic and helping ensure the safety of DJJ youth, staff and the public. To help keep you informed, we created a Fact Sheet about the virus and our Agency's response to it. If you have any additional questions, please submit them to [publicinformation@djj.sc.gov](mailto:publicinformation@djj.sc.gov).

## THE BASICS ABOUT COVID-19

### WHAT IS COVID-19?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is the disease caused by coronavirus, which causes respiratory illness. It was first discovered in China in December 2019. COVID-19 has now spread to countries around the world, and there have been cases in all 50 U.S. States.

### HOW IS THE CORONAVIRUS SPREAD?

It is mostly spread from person to person through close contact (coughing, sneezing). The virus can also live on hard surfaces for up to a few days

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19?

- Fever (temperature over 100 degrees F)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath (tight feeling in chest)

Most people have mild symptoms that go away in a few days. Some people may have more severe symptoms and need medical care.

### WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

- Social distancing - Stay at least 6 feet away from others and avoid close contact unless necessary
- Wash your hands frequently
- Avoid touching your face
- Keep your living and work spaces clean
- Wipe down "high touch" surfaces often (doorknobs, handles, counters, railings).

# LIMITING COVID-19 TRANSMISSION WITHIN DJJ

## HOW IS DJJ PREVENTING COVID-19 FROM BEING INTRODUCED INTO ITS EVALUATION CENTERS, THE JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER AND THE BROAD RIVER ROAD COMPLEX?

Within our secured facilities, we have implemented preventive measures that meet or exceed all current recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC DHEC), and include:

### SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Suspended visitation at all secure facilities and alternative placement sites. Instead, we are increasing the availability of phone calls and video conferencing between youth and their families.
- Youth are receiving virtual or pre-recorded educational instruction and faith-based services.
- Staff and youth are avoiding large gatherings.
- Staff are conducting work and meetings remotely when possible. Almost half of DJJ's staff are telecommuting, still providing the critical services needed to serve the young people in our custody and care.
- DJJ Juvenile Detention Center (JDC) intake staff reserve the right to refuse admission of any juvenile that is severely ill, and require law enforcement staff to take the juvenile to a local hospital to be assessed and medically cleared before admission to the facility.

### SCREENINGS

- Juveniles arriving at our facilities are receiving a temperature screening and symptom check upon arrival, and are monitored routinely for development of symptoms. If youth have an elevated temperature, they are immediately referred to that facility's medical infirmary for further evaluation.
- Conducting health screenings of all staff and contractors at the front gates before granting entry to one of our facilities. This includes taking temperatures and asking questions to see if the person has traveled to a known "hot spot," has knowingly been in contact with someone suspected of having COVID-19, or is experiencing any symptoms themselves. If employees are screened with an elevated temperature, they will be asked to go home and contact their medical provider for further guidance.

### HYGIENE

- Regularly sanitizing all "high touch" surfaces in work areas with a disinfectant solution that is approved to kill viruses. This can be a commercial cleaner (such as Lysol), or a 1:10 bleach solution.
- Conducting an hourly handwashing routine for staff and youth. Staff are teaching juveniles proper hand-washing techniques.
- Additional sanitization products (hand sanitizer dispensers, gloves, disinfectant sprays and wipes) are being made available to staff.

## **WHAT CHANGES HAVE BEEN MADE AT DJJ'S 43 COUNTY OFFICES TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 WHEN INTERACTING WITH AGENCY-INVOLVED YOUTH IN THE COMMUNITY?**

We understand face-to face interaction is an important and fundamental part of serving and rehabilitating youth offenders. Our Community staff has been advised to limit physical contact when possible and instead conduct meetings with youth and their families via phone or video conferencing. All Community staff have also been instructed to regularly sanitize their work areas with a disinfectant solution that is approved to kill viruses. In addition, "Project: Right Turn" has been suspended until further notice and our annual volunteer banquet scheduled for April is postponed. For a full list of county offices and their contact information, see our [County Directory](#).

## **IS DJJ LOOKING AT MEDICAL RECORDS TO SEE WHICH YOUTH UNDER THEIR CARE AND CUSTODY HAVE MEDICAL CONDITIONS THAT PUT THEM AT HIGHER RISK?**

DJJ's medical staff review each resident's medical history and current medical conditions upon arrival at the facility. Yes, we are actively identifying youth who have health conditions that place them at higher risk for COVID-19.

## **WHAT IS DJJ'S PLAN IF A JUVENILE OR STAFF BECOMES INFECTED WITH COVID-19?**

DJJ is following guidelines from the CDC, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), and our medical professionals on staff.

Staff:

- Will be treated by their medical provider.
- Will not be allowed to come back to work until a doctor approves.

Youth:

- Will be taken to the Medical Infirmary on campus and isolated to avoid possible further spread of the virus.
- Will be cared for by our licensed medical staff.
- Will be transported to emergency care or hospital facilities if necessary.

## **HOW IS SCDJJ WORKING WITH OTHER LOCAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO MINIMIZE THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW YOUTH, AND POSSIBLY THE CORONAVIRUS, INTO ITS FACILITIES?**

Agency Executive Director Freddie B. Pough has reached out directly to Family Court Judges, Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police, Solicitors and Public Defenders to ask for their help to ensure only those youth who are deemed a current, serious risk to public safety be detained and/or committed at DJJ's detention center, evaluation centers, long-term commitment facility and alternative placement sites.

SCDJJ has recommended a number of alternatives, including:

- Increased availability of electronic monitoring.
- Increased case management and monitoring by DJJ's Intensive Supervision Officers (ISOs).
- Active electronic monitoring by our sister-agency, the Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services (DPPPS).

The Agency is also working with Courts to allow youth who are currently at a DJJ evaluation center awaiting disposition to return home to await their court hearing (depending upon the nature of their charges).

## TRUSTED RESOURCES

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)

[SC Dept. of Health and Environmental Control \(SC DHEC\)](#)

[Resources to Help Cope with Coronavirus \(SCDMH\)](#)

[County Closures \(SCEMD website\)](#)

[Governor Henry McMaster's Twitter Feed](#)