



NEWS

Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice

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BON AIR JCC RESIDENTS WHO TEST POSITIVE FOR CORONAVIRUS RECEIVING 24-HOUR MEDICAL CARE

Richmond, VA, April 17 – Residents of DJJ’s Bon Air Juvenile Correctional Center who test positive for the COVID-19 virus receive round-the-clock medical care from DJJ’s chief physician, nurse practitioner, and a team of licensed nurses in an area of the facility that is separate from other residents.

“Of the 25 Bon Air residents who have tested positive, I’m pleased to report that 21 exhibited no outward symptoms, and only four had symptoms that were no more severe than a cold or flu,” said DJJ Chief Physician Dr. Christopher Moon. “Any resident who tested positive was immediately placed in medical isolation. Thirteen of those residents have already been released from medical isolation per Virginia Department of Health (VDH) guidelines.”

“As an agency that provides care for children, our first priority has been keeping residents and staff safe and healthy,” said DJJ Director Valerie Boykin. “We keep our residents’ parents and loved ones informed and up to date. We had previously declined to release the number of youth who tested positive for COVID-19 to protect the privacy of our underage residents. This practice was in line with other youth-serving agencies in the Commonwealth and other juvenile justice agencies across the country. Over the past two weeks, we have begun to see some of these agencies reconsider such policies. As the number of cases has risen, DJJ believes the privacy of individual residents can be protected.”

All of the residents at Bon Air are screened for the virus two times per day. They are tested at the slightest hint of symptoms. This practice is more vigorous than what the average citizen experiences, and staff learn the results of the tests usually 24 to 48 hours

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after they are administered, according to Dr. Moon and Dr. Bridget Wilson, Nurse Manager.

In mid-March, DJJ's medical staff began routinely screening all Bon Air residents by taking temperatures. A COVID-19 test is administered when a youth exhibits any symptoms, including showing a temperature of 100.3 degrees or higher, per CDC guidelines. "When we received the first positive test for a Bon Air resident, and at the recommendation of the VDH, out of an abundance of caution we also tested residents who had a temperature between 99 and 100," said Dr. Wilson. "It was this slightly elevated temperature that led to the vast majority of our tests. We will continue to be aggressive with our testing."

"We are extremely grateful for the efforts of our medical team during the last few weeks, and thank them for their dedication and professionalism in trying circumstances," Boykin said.

Any resident who tests positive for the coronavirus is immediately taken to the Central Infirmary (CI) or an alternate medical unit on campus, apart from other residents and staff. Both the CI and alternate unit(s) have been supplied with portable industrial HEPA Filter Air Abatement Units to reduce the risk of further spread to staff. No resident has required emergency or hospital care; however, a resident would be transported if needed. Parents of each youth who tests positive are individually notified.

"We've been working closely with the Bon Air JCC by providing recommendations to address the spread of the virus in their facility," said Dr. Alexander Samuel, Health Director of the Chesterfield Health District.

Since mid-March, after consultation with the Virginia Department of Health, DJJ has implemented the following measures to provide as much protection as possible to Bon Air's other residents and staff:

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- All Bon Air JCC staff have been assigned cloth masks, which they are required to wear inside the living units, any time they are in the presence of a youth, and any time they are unable to social distance with colleagues. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines now recommend the wearing of a cloth mask to provide protection for coughing and sneezing.
- Staff working on units with residents who have been diagnosed positive or on units that had a resident diagnosed with COVID 19 are issued medical PPE.
- All residents are assigned a mask which they are required to wear during waking hours, while outside of their rooms.
- Youth are reminded daily of the requirement to “social distance” to the extent possible at all times, wear their masks, regularly wash their hands and not to touch their faces.
- Anyone who enters Bon Air JCC is screened in the lobby before entering the facility. Anyone who fails or refuses the screening will not be permitted to enter.
- Everyone entering the building must also wash and sanitize their hands in the lobby.

In addition to these proactive health safety measures, DJJ has been working to release residents, always keeping public safety in mind, in an effort to reduce our population. Since mid-March, Bon Air’s population has been reduced by approximately 10 percent.

For more details and further updates about how DJJ is addressing the COVID 19 virus and its efforts to protect its staff and residents while continuing its mission to protect the public, click on the link below.

<http://www.djj.virginia.gov/pages/about-djj/covid.htm>

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