Tennessee Department of Correction (TDOC) Response to COVID-19 and Continuity of Operations

General Activities

- TDOC maintains Emergency Operations Plans / Continuity of Operations Plans for a variety of emergency events and has implemented a series of these as this fluid situation develops
- Chief Medical Officer/Acting Assistant Commissioner of Clinical Services monitors situation providing daily updates and guidance to the executive leadership team for collaborative decision making
- Constant communication with other state DOCs to evaluate potential developments and operational changes
- Informed staff to use their best judgement and avoid the workplace if they are sick or symptomatic
- March 17th update, implementing enhanced Alternative Workplace Solutions (AWS) strategies for those whose work can be accomplished remotely

Prison Operations

- Current state
  - All visitation and volunteer services are cancelled until further notice
    - Parole hearings and legal visits will continue and utilize below screening process
  - Facilities are evaluating all inmates upon intake and returns from court/medical and all outside work locations
  - Facilities will be conducting noninvasive screenings of everyone for symptoms such as fever (over 100.4F) and difficulty breathing prior to entry to maximize prevention efforts (no touch thermometers ordered)
    - Currently utilizing temporary screening questions and observation until receipt of no touch thermometers
  - March 17th update, in custody educational programs
    - The department will continue to operate educational programs as normal due to the self-contained nature of the population
    - Tennessee Board of Regents has extended spring break through March 20th, effectively suspending TCAT and community college classes at TDOC facilities
- Anticipated plans in the event an inmate presents with flu-like symptoms
Immediate isolation and enacting contact precautions and personal protective equipment (PPE)

As facility infirmary capacity becomes strained, TDOC has identified regional facilities to accommodate overflow isolation and treatment
  - Consideration of proximity to major medical facilities included (MCCX, DSNF, RMSI, WTSP/WTRC)
  - Internal transportation will be utilized with contact precautions/PPE and disinfected after each use

Movement to outside hospital facilities would be on a case by case basis dependent on respiratory distress

- Continue to work with contracted medical vendor to ensure staffing levels are sufficient to provide necessary medical care
  - Management and coordination of needed medical supplies are responsibility of vendor
  - TDOC has audited, inventoried and secured current personal protective equipment as well
- Waived copays for inmates in need of medical care
- Food service operations
  - Ensuring food service vendor is diligent in adherence to food safety measures
  - Contingency meal plans are in place
  - Evaluating supply chain confidence for any necessary adjustments to contingency plans
- Free weekly phone calls to maintain contact with family members
- Monitoring staffing levels and utilizing support staff as needed to ensure essential service delivery
  - Utilize AWS for essential services that can be conducted offsite

Community Supervision

- Current state
  - All probationers and parolees continue to be supervised according to risk
  - Any in office reporting will incorporate noninvasive screenings prior to entry
  - Supervision protocols have been modified to limit high traffic in Probation Parole offices and limiting exposure to offenders’ individual residences
    - These include video reporting (FaceTime, Skype, etc.) when available and telephone calls
    - Home visits will be conducted through residence verifications
  - In office reporting will be conducted for homeless offenders and those who do not have access to telephones or other technology
Increased officer communications with offenders through text and phone calls
  • Updated reporting instructions, etc. available on TDOC website

March 17th, expanding use of AWS and maximize alternative supervision strategies to limit in office staffing and use while ensuring public safety
  • Alternative supervision strategies will be supported by technology to accomplish normal in person contact
  • In office supervision will be limited to services that cannot otherwise be completed remotely such as intake, drug screens, etc.

Regular stakeholder communication with judiciary and board of parole regarding supervision strategies

Anticipated plans in the event of site closures
  • Identify essential services that would need to be provided through AWS in the event of office closures
    • Coordinate necessary resources to support this service delivery

Day Reporting Centers (DRCs)

Current state
  • DRCs are operating as normal with precautionary measures in place to screen staff and offenders prior to entry
  • March 17th update, utilizing modified schedules to minimize group size while ensuring essential program/treatment delivery

Anticipated plans in the event of site closures
  • Utilize AWS for essential service staff
  • Implement telephonic programming delivery
  • Tele-health triage, assessments, and individual therapy services conducted by clinical staff
  • Risk needs assessments completed by video capable platforms (FaceTime, Skype, etc.)
  • Residence checks will be completed by Probation and Parole Officers to limit physical or environmental contacts

Operational Support & Human Resources

Developing plans and coordinating resources to support potential increased alternative workplace solution (AWS) scenarios for non-essential personnel in the event of site closures

March 17th update, the Tennessee Correction Academy (TCA) has been closed to all training functions
Current preservice training classes will be conducted locally and supported by TCA staff
All currently scheduled in-service or specialty training will be accomplished virtually or rescheduled to a later date

- Established guidance for staff who wish to self-isolate due to being high risk
  - Allowing CDC classified high risk staff to request ADA accommodation to self-isolate based on medical advice until March 31st

Central Office and support staff

- Centralized effort for procuring approved supplies and commodities such as hand sanitizers and cleaning products
- Identifying services that would need to be provided through AWS in the event of office closures
- Coordination of necessary resources and equipment to support this effort

Communication

- Frequent and ongoing communication with internal and external stakeholders through all channels to inform of current status and changes as they develop

Other Activities

- Continuous review and coordination of agency staffing resources to ensure all essential functions are maintained across the state (utilizing OIC, Central Office, CCC, etc.)
- Delayed upcoming audit activities to limit staff travel and exposure
- Identify and effect any needed policy exemptions to mitigate noncompliance issues during audit processes