



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
**PROBATION**  
DEPARTMENT

**Los Angeles County Probation Department**  
**COVID-19 UPDATE # 2**  
**4/9/2020**

**Juvenile Facilities**

*Updates on efforts to further reduce the introduction of new individuals into the jail and juvenile facilities while balancing public safety and risk to the physical safety of the community.*

From March 2, 2020 to April 6, 2020, the population in juvenile institutions has decreased by 22%.

<b>Juvenile Institutions Youth Population</b>			
	<b>3/2/2020</b>	<b>4/6/2020</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>DSB</b>	551	401	-150
<b>RTSB</b>	289	252	-37
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>-187</b>

*Updates on efforts to ensure effective screening of all new admissions, along with plans to ensure staff entering the facilities are healthy (e.g. taking temperatures), and plans to*

ensure appropriate staffing levels and treatment should individuals become infected, and adequate data collection and tracking based on public health approaches;

## **Staff Health and Screening Measures**

The Department is screening for every person entering a juvenile detention facility. Those attempting to enter a juvenile hall or camp at any time are required to verbally respond if they currently have new or worsening symptoms of a respiratory illness. If the individual's response is that they are experiencing symptoms, they will be restricted from entering the facility that day.

The Los Angeles County Probation Department has confirmed that two employees who work at Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall have tested positive for COVID-19. One employee received the results of their test on March 27 and the other received the results of their test on April 5. These employees worked in two different units. A total of 40 youth in the two different units who were potentially exposed to the positive testing staff are being separated from the rest of the population at the juvenile hall. As on April 6, none of the youth have symptoms of COVID-19.

Parents and guardians have been notified about the exposure and youth have the ability to make extended telephone calls at no charge to their family. The units have been cleaned and thoroughly sanitized and remain fully staffed. Probation is doing its best to provide the personal protective equipment necessary to keep all staff and youth healthy. Juvenile Court Health Services are closely monitoring the health of the youths that are in those units including checking their symptoms twice a day.

A total of seven employees who work for the Los Angeles County Probation Department have tested positive for the COVID-19 virus, but only the two mentioned above work in juvenile institutions. These employees are legally entitled to privacy and we will provide no further details at this time. For each employee who has tested positive, the County will notify potential workplace contacts, including other employees who may have been in close contact with the COVID-19 positive individual.

## **Juvenile Intake Procedures: Screening on Entry into Juvenile Hall**

The Department continues to screen all youth admitted to facilities for risk of COVID-19 infection at the time of admission. Should it be required, Probation and Juvenile Court Health Services (JCHS) have identified appropriate space to isolate youth with medical issues. Probation and JCHS continue to complete a screening that includes asking questions related to infectious diseases which continue to be part of the Initial Intake Questionnaire. JCHS is immediately notified if any symptoms that are associated with the COVID-19 are observed, if the youth has had close contact with an individual with COVID-19 or if the youth has traveled to an area previously identified as a COVID-19 area of concern.

## **Health Care Services**

Clinical resources:

A DHS Infectious Disease specialist is assigned to assist correctional facilities. He will be a clinical resource for medical staff to help workflow and answer clinical questions.

Admissions:

Admission processes remain the same. Efforts are being made to be sure that youth are being screened as early as possible. Measures are in place to quarantine any youth with symptoms in the safest way possible.

Clinics:

Workflows are continuing to be reviewed and refined as necessary to be sure that youth are being seen for necessary appointments safely. Specialty clinic appointments outside the juvenile hall are to be either made via phone visits or rescheduled as much as possible.

Releases from a Probation facility:

Any quarantined or isolated youth will need to be reviewed with JCHS to be sure that the receiving location is aware of the medical status of the youth and can maintain the appropriate level of housing for the youth. If necessary, Public Health will also be made aware as appropriate.

The Department ensures that all critical security and safety posts are manned as required by the Board and State Community Standards and in accordance with the Department's Emergency Operations Plan. Contingency plans have been developed and put in place if facilities are not adequately staffed. Juvenile and Adult Field Operations have been designated to assist and have continued to report to the halls and camps since March 23, 2020.

**Number of Juvenile and Adult Field Staff Temporarily Re-allocated to Juvenile Institutions**

Facility	No. of Staff Reported 4/01/20	No. of Staff Reported 4/02/20
BJNJH	35	33
CJH	59	33
CBA	12	17
CGR	18	23

CJP	17	20
CJS	1	1
CVK	5	8
DKC	25	32
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>217</b>

Updates on efforts to provide increased and sufficient handwashing, hygiene, and cleaning supplies, and policies to support best practices in personal and institutional hygiene (such as handwashing and cleaning), including providing sufficient information and education on proper hygiene measures and effective strategies to reduce infection to all individuals within our care within detention facilities, and staff and personnel who work in those facilities. This should also include efforts to control rumors and reduce unnecessary fear among prisoners and staff as much as possible. Note: Staff population includes all sworn and non-sworn staff throughout all three shifts.

## **Expanded Precautions at Institutions**

The Department has developed a Juvenile Institutions Operation Plan to minimize the risks of COVID-19 in the facilities that was reviewed and approved by the Department of Public Health (DPH). The plan is aligned with the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and other jurisdictions in California. The Department's role during the pandemic is detailed in addition to the implementation of practices and procedures that limit the transmission of the virus to staff and youth. DPH signage in English and Spanish has been posted outside each facility and inside the living units, restrooms, kitchen, staff sleeping quarters. The Department has increased daily cleaning and sanitation at each facility in addition to posting and distributing COVID-19 related information to educate staff and youth about the virus and precautions that are being taken.

All Probation facilities have been instructed to conduct additional deep-cleaning efforts in high-traffic, high-volume areas, including visiting and health care facilities. Staff have also been granted permission to carry up to two ounces of personal-use hand sanitizer. Public Health guidelines are reinforced daily to all staff and youth of the importance of social distancing and frequent hand washing.

## **Cleaning Efforts in Institutions**

Probation's Management Services Bureau continue to provide janitorial services at facilities to ensure all bathrooms and staff quarters (where applicable) are cleaned daily and have readily available hand soap, paper towels, toilet paper and disinfectant. Extra hand sanitizers were distributed to staff on April 4th; however, we are awaiting receipt of

the back ordered shipment. The Department has also hired additional staff to clean and disinfect common touch areas twice per shift.

### **Social Distancing Efforts in Institutions**

- Limiting the congregation of youth to small groups of 6 or less
- Rearranging scheduled movements to minimize mixing of individuals from different housing areas
- Having a youth shower individually as opposed to several youth at a time
- Maximizing outside space during recreation
- Conducting staggered meals (having youth sit at different tables in small groups)
- Having an identified space for youth who are suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19
- Instructing staff to comply with social distancing when coming on or off duty
- Having youth sleep head to toe in camps
- Having DMH and JCHS communicate with youth by phone when appropriate

### **Communication and guidance to staff**

We have worked continuously to keep staff informed of the evolving situation, including creating internal and external webpages with health-related information from CDC and L.A. County Public Health on how they can protect themselves against COVID-19. Managers and supervisors are conducting staff meetings in conjunction with JCHS to update staff on the pandemic and answer any questions or concerns. Several emails have also been disseminated by the Department informing staff of updated information. We have a dedicated page for employees on our intranet, this page provides messages from our Chief regarding COVID-19, telework information, and telework time codes. There is also information from L.A. County Public Health, such as updates on personnel and work-related questions specific to the COVID-19 issue.

Probation cares for the health and wellness of its workforce and have been working to accommodate those who have been impacted by this evolving situation. We will continue to work diligently with DHR and labor organizations on how we can best keep our workforce protected and provide for the safety and security of our institutions.

### **COVID-19 Communications with Youth**

JCHS presented a PowerPoint presentation to educate youth in the halls and camps about COVID-19 and the proper precautions to take while housed in the facility. Probation and medical staff were present to answer any questions or concerns the youth have about the pandemic. Town Hall meetings continue to be held to alleviate rumors and youth's anxiety in addition to reinforcing proactive personal hygiene practices such as daily frequent hand washing, coughing into the upper sleeve and social distancing. Youth continue to be

advised to notify staff if they are not feeling well or are displaying any symptoms associated with COVID-19.

## **Communications to Clients and Families about COVID-19**

Juvenile Institutional Managers are provided with daily COVID-19 updates. In addition, they continue to participate in weekly conference calls hosted by Emergency Management to share information and obtain COVID-19 updates from partner agencies. In addition, efforts to provide youth and families with COVID-19 information include:

- Posting of DPH signage outside each facility and inside the living units, restrooms, kitchen, staff sleeping quarters.
- Interagency town hall meetings with JCHS nurses to address concerns, answer questions and provide plan
- Contacting parents, and community-based organizations and advising on the cancelation of all normal visitations.
- Mailing of COVID-19 information flyers for parents and community

*A plan to support increased virtual contact and visitation with people in custody at no cost, as well as communication with families regarding when visitation will resume – once determined – in order to minimize anxiety and increase communication and familial connections.*

## **Youth-Parent Communications**

Visitation at juvenile halls and residential treatment facilities remains temporarily suspended. Youth are receiving free phone calls in addition to multiple/extended phone calls. A Parent Outreach Team was developed to call every parent confirming that they received the COVID-19 informational letter (in English and Spanish) and that their child is making and receiving free phone calls. Additionally, the Department is exploring video conferencing between parent and youth utilizing platforms such as Skype and is Working on getting iPhones assigned to juvenile hall living units and to camps to be used for youth to maintain regular connection with loved ones.

*Plans to ensure adequate space for quarantining or isolating individuals currently in custody who may become infected or who are vulnerable and cannot be released, and thus require extra protections to ensure their wellbeing.*

## **Probation Procedures for Quarantine and Isolation**

Youth that are quarantined due to possible exposure by another youth or staff are separated to a different unit and the unit in question is cleaned and sanitized immediately. JCHS check on the quarantined youth symptoms twice daily and notifies management of any concerns that arise.

In the event a youth (up to 5) are screened as being infectious, they shall be transported and housed in juvenile hall in individual rooms inside the medical module. If the number of youths with similar symptoms significantly rise (>5) and the medical module runs out

of individual rooms, the excess cohort of youth be placed in an available single unit. If there is no available space in juvenile hall, infected camp youth must remain in camp and housed in one side of the dorm.

#### PPE:

Medical staff are wearing PPE on a voluntary basis but are required to wear PPE when medical care is needed. Discussions are being made to have surgical masks for all clinical encounters. However, social distancing is recommended whenever possible and good hand hygiene is still encouraged. More hand sanitizers are being obtained to give to medical staff on an individual basis for quicker access to perform hand hygiene. Efforts are underway to have N95 masks collected and sterilized per DHS guidelines.

#### Youth with upper respiratory infection symptoms:

Working with probation staff at the juvenile halls, units were identified to be used to quarantine any youth with exposures to known COVID-19 cases or isolate those with symptoms of upper respiratory infections. Testing will be done on these youths on a case-by-case basis with assistance from Public Health and DHS Infectious Disease staff. If symptomatic, youth will be isolated for at least seven days.

So far, three youth have been tested for COVID-19 with all three tests coming back as negative.

### **Mental Health Services**

The Department of Mental Health is working with their information technology staff to set up videoconferencing tools in order to enhance its capability and enable DMH to serve juvenile justice youth by providing mental health and psychiatric services via a virtual platform.

### **School for Youth in Juvenile Facilities**

The Los Angeles County Office of Education has provided youth with two weeks' worth of educational packets.

Any youth requiring assistance will be provided tutoring by Probation staff from Operation Read. Probation Education Services will continue to provide online college courses that take place at all DSB and RTSB juvenile facilities. All credit courses are offered through the Los Angeles Community College District and are UC/CSU transferable. Youth are provided support during scheduled college classes and in study groups.

### **Youth Recreational and Enrichment Activities**

Outdoor programs are continuing to be conducted as weather permits. Programs are being conducted outside as it is feasible to maintain social distancing. Additionally, the Department has taken inventory of each facility needs in terms of books, magazines, board games, TV/movies and sports equipment and are in the process of acquiring extra equipment in addition to reading materials.

## Rehabilitative Programs

During this time, Probation Education Services staff continue to provide the following services:

- Youth Work Program: In collaboration with Workforce Development and Aging Community Services (WDACS), youth will continue to gain work experience and earn a paycheck in the Camps and Halls. Youth work for an average of 120 hours which includes 20 hours of paid Personal Enrichment Training (PET) facilitated by trained Probation Education Services Staff. Each participant receives an employment transition plan upon their release from the camp or hall.
- Book Clubs: Education services staff facilitate multiple book clubs throughout the camps and halls.
- R.I.S.E (Resilience and Intergroup Solidarity Education) RISE consists of 25 small group sessions that reinforce team building, coping skills and provides conflict resolution techniques among other skills.
- Careersafe Certification: This program provides on-demand training courses in the area of OSHA designed to improve workplace safety, compliance and risk management. Youth are able to enroll in various 10-hour courses that lead to valuable training certificates.

All programming facilitated accounts for social distancing and small group settings.

*Plans and/or efforts underway to increase the safe release of, or care for, those who are currently incarcerated who may be particularly vulnerable to COVID19, based on age, or existing medical conditions, as well as those who are pretrial, are approaching their scheduled release date, or may otherwise qualify for safe and early release, with a goal to reduce overcrowding and safely lower the jail and juvenile hall and probation camp populations, without compromising community safety, in order to prevent the spread of the virus, with updates on how many people are being impacted*

## Reducing the Population in Juvenile Facilities

The L.A. County Probation Department is working with the courts and legal partners on methods to safely reduce the juvenile population housed at Probation facilities. The Community Detention Program will only detain violations when a youth cuts their electronic monitoring device, is missing for more than 12 hours or commits a new crime. In terms of releasing post-adjudicated youth sent to camp for rehabilitation, we continuously screen for early release due to youths meeting their treatment goals. Those that meet eligibility criteria will be sent to court with a recommendation for release, however, only the court can authorize a release.

- Unlike the adult system, we are unable to unilaterally release children from custody. Youth are committed to our care by a judicial process and court order and can only be released from custody by the juvenile court. On March 15, the Department submitted revised Community Detention Program (CDP) protocols to



Judge John Lawson, Assistant Presiding Judge, LA County Delinquency Court which was subsequently approved on March 18. Effective March 18, the following CDP protocols have been implemented:

- The Community Detention Program will only detain violations when a youth cuts their electronic monitoring device, is missing for more than 12 hours or commits a new crime. Otherwise they will be kept on and a report will be sent with the next court date. Detentions are not conducted as a result of failure to drug test and gang association.
- From March 2<sup>nd</sup> to April 6<sup>th</sup>, we have seen the population in our Halls reduce from 551 to 401 and our Camps from 289 to 252. Overall, the Juvenile Institutions population has decreased 22% in the last month.
- After discussions with the juvenile court, the Department screened 311 cases on March 24<sup>th</sup> in the camps to consider early release in accordance with the guidelines received. As a result, we recommended and submitted a total of 56 cases to court asking for release where appropriate. Since then, 21 youth have been released. Of the remaining 35 pending, five have scheduled releases this week. Additionally, 19 youth have been released without a recommendation.
- Probation will continue to meet with Juvenile Court leadership, the Public Defender and the Alternative Public Defender to evaluate court orders.
- As a precautionary measure, to limit the number of incoming and outgoing youth, we have temporarily halted movements from the halls to camps and camps to halls beginning April 2 and continuing through April 16<sup>th</sup>.

## Plan for Court Hearings

The Department has developed protocols in collaboration with Probation's Information Systems Bureau to utilize the WebEx Video Conferencing platform for virtual court proceedings. Each hall has installed four workstations with the WebEx platform and has conducted a successful pilot with Pomona Court (Department 281) at Central Juvenile Hall on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Virtual court will go live at the remaining departments on April 6<sup>th</sup> and April 7<sup>th</sup>. ISB will be available to support the courts on site or via remote desktop. There are certain types of cases that **will require** an in-person appearance. These are:

- Court will not take a plea on a strike case, DJJ eligible case involving a crime that is sexual in nature or a 707(b) offense via WebEx. The defense counsel and minor need to be present in court for a plea on these types of cases. This is subject to change if there is a full and complete shut-down of the court and no parties are allowed to enter.
- Court will not be handling trials or transfer hearings via WebEx.
- If there are sensitive cases (non-707(b) or non-strike), the DA or defense does need to voice an objection to using WebEx for the handling of the case if there is an issue.
- If a protective order needs to be issued, the minor needs to be present to be personally served.

A youth that needs to attend court but is in a quarantined unit **will not** be transported to court. The youth will also **not** be using a Virtual Court workstation. The unit staff will need to work closely with the Virtual Court Coordinators and the youth will be allowed to phone in to the virtual hearing from his or her quarantined unit.

Updates on efforts to provide resources to support those who are released from the jails, juvenile halls or camps to avoid becoming homeless upon release; including: a. Screening of health and housing status of all adults and youth upon release, b. Collaborating with the existing and new housing resources within the County and the community, including the Office of Diversion and Reentry, Department of Health Services, Department of Mental Health, Chief Executive Office, and the Office of Emergency Management to link inmates who are being released from County jail to medical housing or other available housing, when deemed appropriate

## **Living arrangements for Youth upon Release**

By law, Probation must always take steps to avoid release of youth to homelessness. All releases continue to happen in consultation with a parent/caregiver or, where none is available, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) or Probation Placement.

Beginning with the initial MDT, the youth's transition plan into the community is discussed. If the youth is under the care of DCFS or has a history of being in suitable placement, the youth is flagged to ensure their transition plan includes housing, in consultation with DCFS and/or Probation Placement. If the youth is set for family reunification the home is assessed by the field DPO. If the home is deemed unsuitable, the transition officer will work with placement to find a relative. If placement is the only option, the youth is referred to Residential Based Services to start the interagency screening and the camp facilitates the interview.

If the youth is over 18, and the youth has previous placement, youth will qualify for AB12 and/or Independent Living Program. Most times the court will terminate probation and the youth will be placed in transitional bed with the Housing Authority, but at the very least go to a shelter.

## **Suitable Placement**

- Expediting movement of youth from Juvenile Hall to Probation Assessment Centers for youth pending new suitable placement or replacement orders
- Continued face to face contacts with youth placed in Short Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPs), with Resources Families (relatives/non-relative homes). Also, non-minor Dependents placed in Foster Care through Transitional Housing Programs and Supervised Independent Living Programs.
- Providing mutual aid to other Probation Departments throughout the state by providing face to face contact with youth who have been placed in STRTPs in the County of Los Angeles.

- Continued participation on the weekly County Leadership call with STRTP Leadership to proactively work through potential issues that might surface for staff and/or youth as a result of being exposed to or contracting COVID-19.

## **Juvenile Services Field Division**

- Monthly telephone contact with all juvenile probationers
- Weekly contacts with High-Risk Offenders, specifically the Intensive Gang Supervision Program
- Providing assistance and information pamphlets/guides to families unable to travel to obtain food items from food centers as set up by various school districts and other community resources
- Currently surveying youth/caregivers to determine the barriers for youth unable to connected with an academic program with an eye toward connecting youth to or providing the necessary resources to engage in academic programming
- Court Officers continue to report daily to juvenile court departments
- Citation Diversion Court hearings postponed until further notice

### *Other Probation Department Division Responses to COVID-19 Pandemic*

## **Adult Division**

### **Field Probation COVID-19 Precautions and related activities**

Following the guidance of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, the Los Angeles County Probation Department closed all offices to the public on Monday, March 16, 2020 until further notice. Public safety is a priority and the Department will continue to maintain frequent contact with clients. Deputy Probation Officers are reaching out to their clients by phone, focusing on the highest-risk offenders. Probation is also asking clients to proactively reach out to their probation officer.

## **Adult Services Division**

During the past week, Probation personnel reviewed and assessed a list of 662 Probationers that were in the LA County jail system partially on a Probation hold. After the assessment, it was determined that there were actually 528 individuals that remained in custody, with the concurrence of our public safety partners, Probation would not object to release the hold on 483 of the Probationers and make them eligible for release from the jail system.

We continue to participate in weekly/daily conference calls with justice partners, justice deputies and interested parties around our COVID-19 response and care of clients and staff. The Department is also working with CDCR to receive and process over 668 Post-Released Community Supervision Persons (PSPs) scheduled to be released over the next 30-60 days and coordinating with our community partners to provide services to these individuals.

The Department continues to triage our high need cases and those with particularly vulnerable victims for field contacts. These contacts will include checking the welfare of vulnerable households, providing resources and having a public safety presence.

### **Proposed Strategies to address AB 109 arrests, absconders and court overcrowding**

#### **Arrests/ Preventing the overcrowding of Courts:**

- We are reducing the number of arrests by modifying the criteria to only be placed in custody when the client reasonably presents as ***a danger to the community***. Some examples are any new serious, violent or sexual matter, violation of a restraining/protective order, possession of weapons, etc.
- Implemented milestone credit incentives for early release
- Exploring the use of GPS as an alternative to revocation
- Exploring the use of GPS for home confinement
- Exploring more suspended sentences with future progress reports 60-90 days out

#### **Absconds/ Preventing the overcrowding of Courts:**

- Refine process before issuing a warrant that includes 3 attempts to contact the supervised person and allowing 5 days for the client to report
- Upon the court receiving a request to issuing a warrant, the court will release the person on their own recognizance the person with a date 60-90 days out. Probation will cite the supervised person to appear. This will only be for clients with an address and non-violent, non-serious and/or non-sexual matters.
- The Department is also exploring more suspended sentences with future progress reports 60-90 days out.

#### **Implemented Steps Taken to Reduce the Jail Population and Court Volume:**

- Ceased all Flash Incarcerations
- Ceased addressing low level violation of Conditions of Supervision by custody time.
- Ceased filing Violation Petitions on Misdemeanor and Felony Offenses that do not pose a threat of danger to the community.
- Increased Incentives
- Reviewed the LASD list of 528 inmates who are on supervision to AB 109 and proposed 45 inmates remain in custody and approved of 483 being released.

### **Communication and guidance to public**

For information or services, clients and members of the community may call the juvenile facilities. For general questions, please contact the Probation Information Center at 866-931-2222 Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

To see previous Probation COVID-19 updates, please visit  
<https://probation.lacounty.gov/coronavirus/#1585353402662-50edeac8-16c9>

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