



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

# PROBATION DEPARTMENT

## COVID-19 Weekly Update

May 15, 2020

### Juvenile Facilities

#### Testing of Youth for COVID-19

Juvenile Court Health Services (JCHS) began testing all new youth entering Probation facilities for COVID-19 on May 4. From May 8 to May 15, 58 youth entering juvenile hall were tested for COVID-19 and four tested positive. Overall, as a result of this enhanced testing, six youth entering juvenile hall have tested positive for COVID-19, with all youth being asymptomatic at this time. There is one positive-testing youth at Barry J Nidorf Juvenile Hall, four at Central Juvenile Hall and one in isolation in a community placement.

The youths testing positive have not been exposed to the facility's general population and all youth in juvenile facilities are provided with masks.

21 youth who are not new admits have been tested for COVID-19 since the pandemic began for displaying possible symptoms, with those youth testing negative or have results pending. A total of 109 youth have been tested for COVID-19 overall.

As of May 16, all camp movement will be halted as part of JCHS's efforts to increase COVID-19 testing. All youth in the halls who are ordered to go to camp will be required to be tested for COVID-19 and receive a negative result prior to proceeding on camp movement.

#### Care of Youth Testing Positive for COVID-19

Youth who have tested positive will be housed in a designated isolation unit. In the event that a youth from camp tests positive, they will remain in juvenile hall and be assigned to one of the designated units. The positive testing youth will be kept separate and apart

from other youth until cleared by medical staff to return to a traditional housing assignment.

### **Reducing the Population in Juvenile Facilities**

Over the period from May 8-May 15, the Los Angeles County juvenile hall population has increased from 357 to 361 and the juvenile residential camp population increased slightly from 183 to 184 over the same period. Since March 2, the juvenile hall population has decreased by 190 youth, or 34.4% and the juvenile camp population has decreased by 105 youth, or 36.3%.

The L.A. County Probation Department continues to work 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. 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. There has been an 88% reduction in Juvenile Probation Violations from January to April.

The Department has been screening cases in the camps to consider early release in accordance with the guidelines received. The Department has been screening cases in the camps to consider early release in accordance with the guidelines received. As of May 5, 131 youth have been released of which 75 cases were granted an early release by the Court through Probation's early release recommendation.

Probation will continue to meet with Juvenile Court leadership, the Public Defender and the Alternative Public Defender to evaluate court orders.

The Los Angeles County Probation Department has temporarily closed Camp Joseph Scott in Santa Clarita, the only Probation facility exclusively housing girls, due to the declining population of youth assigned to Probation camps in Los Angeles County. With only ten girls currently assigned to a camp in all of Los Angeles County, it was no longer feasible to operate Camp Scott with so few youth housed in it.

This past weekend, probation, medical, and support staff who worked at Camp Scott gathered to say a heartfelt goodbye to the ten female youth who were transported to the Dorothy Kirby Center (DKC). The youth from Camp Scott was greeted with welcome signs and a warm welcome from DKC staff upon arrival. The girls were assigned to a cottage exclusively housing former Camp Scott youth at DKC and have transitioned well in their new living quarters.

### **Staff Health and Screening Measures**

The Department is screening 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 department is also conducting infrared temperature checks on all individuals entering juvenile facilities.

Staff in juvenile facilities are wearing face coverings to protect youth and themselves. All staff who are not teleworking have been offered face coverings.

No Probation employees have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last week. Since the pandemic began, 19 Probation staff that have tested positive for COVID-19. Nine of those staff members work in Juvenile facilities, with seven working at Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall and the remaining two having been on leave and not at work when they tested positive.

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.

Currently there are no youth being quarantined due to possible exposure to staff testing positive. If youth are potentially exposed, the Department has medical professionals from Juvenile Court Health Services and Department of Mental Health who would continually monitor the health and well-being of youth that are in those units including checking their symptoms twice a day. Youth that are quarantined due to possible exposure to another youth or staff who have tested positive are separated to a different unit and the unit in question is cleaned and sanitized immediately.

### **Health Care Services**

Juvenile Court Health Services (JCHS) continues to work with Probation facility staff regarding the care of the youth in the Quarantine and Isolation units to prevent potential spread of disease. JCHS nurses have trained selected Probation staff at the juvenile halls and camps for the use of infrared thermometers on all staff and visitors upon entry to the facility. 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.

19 telemedicine workstations at halls, camps, and JCHS headquarters were deployed April 30, and training for nurses, doctors and Probation staff is being finalized on how to use the system to link all halls/camps/JCHS headquarters for assessment and consultation by medical staff and build 24/7 capacity that currently does not exist.

### **Staffing of Juvenile Facilities**

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.

### **Expanded Precautions at Institutions**

In addition to efforts outlined in past updates, Probation has made additional efforts to keep youth and staff safe from COVID-19:

- The Department has issued masks to all staff and youth in juvenile halls and residential camps.
- Alcohol wipes were distributed to all facilities to ensure handheld radios are cleaned frequently.
- 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. The Department has also hired additional staff to clean and disinfect common touch areas twice per shift.
- At this time, per JCHS, use of the swimming pool is prohibited as it is unknown if COVID-19 can be passed in a body of water.

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 personal-use hand sanitizer. Public Health guidelines are reinforced daily to all staff and youth of the importance of social distancing and frequent handwashing.

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

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 facilities 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.

### **Youth-Parent Communications**

In-person visitation at juvenile halls and residential treatment facilities remains suspended. Virtual visiting has begun in both the halls and the camps. Youth are still able to make free phone calls to families and are also provided with supplies for letter writing such as paper, pencils, crayons etc. The Department pays for all postage regardless of the number of letters a youth sends out.

### **Other Youth Activities**

- Father Gregory Boyle from Homeboy Industries recorded a special Mother's Day Mass that was shown to interested youth at juvenile halls and camps last weekend.
- Probation camps are participating in additional programming that includes Urban Strategies, Conflict Resolutions courses, and Arts for Incarcerated Youth Network.

### **Efforts to Address the Medically Fragile Population in Detention Facilities**

The Probation Department continues to not have any youth with compromised immune systems or other medical conditions placing them at higher risk for COVID-19 infection. As previously reported, if any youth have other underlying medical conditions which might exacerbate the impact of such infection if one were to occur, the Department will work with Juvenile Court Health Services (JCHS) to assess and address those issues on a case by case basis.

### **Mental Health Services**

Probation is working with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to implement "virtual counseling" for youth at the halls and camps through video conferencing for routine appointments at DMH kiosks.

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

Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) efforts to provide a quality education to youth in Probation facilities during the pandemic can be found at <https://www.lacoe.edu/LACOE-Schools/Covid-19-Distance-Learning-Plan>

### **Virtual Court Hearings**

Video Court for the halls continue to operate effectively. A youth that needs to attend court but is in a quarantined unit will not be transported to court.

### **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**

- Probation is expediting the 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), and non-minor Dependents placed in Foster Care through Transitional Housing Programs and Supervised Independent Living Programs.
- Probation contracts with the Department of Public Health to provide nurses and health services for youth in suitable placement, including COVID-19 screening and services if needed.
- L.A. County Probation provides 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 informational 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.
- Confirming educational needs of youth on field probation are being met via distance learning.

#### **Adult Division**

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

Area offices remain closed to the public. Deputy Probation Officers continue to maintain contact with probation clients by phone, email and videoconference. Clients are encouraged to reach out to their assigned probation officer as well. The Department continues to conduct field visits and is prioritizing cases where there are vulnerable victims, sex offenders, and any other circumstances that are considered high risk or require special attention. In addition to conducting safety checks, officers are providing COVID-19 Public Health information and resources. Additionally, the Department released

a notice instructing adult field DPOs to work with clients experiencing financial difficulty as it relates to fines and fees.

Adult Field Services is working with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to facilitate the release of inmates back to Los Angeles County and is collaborating with the Sheriff's Department to assist in clearing the inmates for possible release. Probation is working with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and the Los Angeles County Sheriff Department to process these individuals and assist with appropriate orientation, addressing housing and other emergent needs.

The Adult Division is also doing a special outreach to probationers who fall within the vulnerable/high risk age group and may have preexisting health conditions, including the 645 adult clients 65 and over. The outreach is to provide information as published by the county and other subject matter experts and to encourage them to take care of themselves.

As of May 8, 2020, CDCR has released 591 individuals, and 475 have reported to post release supervision. The Probation Department has enhanced its services to stabilize their reentry into the community to ensure basic needs are met including shelter.

Deputy Probation Officers assigned to the Adult Division also continue to support the staffing in juvenile institutions.

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



*The Los Angeles County Probation Department is committed to rebuilding lives and providing for healthier and safer communities for all 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, the Probation Department's mission is to enhance public safety, ensure victims' rights and*

*effect positive probationer behavioral change. The Probation Department comprises nearly 6,100 employees and has an operational budget of \$900 Million as of 2019.*

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