



**County  
Manager**  
Ramiro Chavez

**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

Carolina Mejia  
District One

Gary Edwards  
District Two

Tye Menser  
District Three

## **PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

October 24, 2022

Kurt Hardin,  
Interim Director

Dimyana Abdelmalek, MD, MPH  
Health Officer

### **Statement on COVID-19 restrictions in Thurston County Correctional Facilities**

In recent months there have been questions about the impact of COVID-19 mitigation measures in Thurston County correctional facilities. Thurston County Public Health and Social Services (TCPHSS), like other local health jurisdictions across the state, provide guidance and recommendations to the Sheriff's Office. Guidance is based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Washington State Department of Health, Washington State Department of Labor & Industries, and the operational experience TCPHSS has gained during the past two years of emergency response dedicated to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Sheriff's Office works to provide the safest environment possible for all members within the Thurston County Correctional Facility. The Sheriff's Office and TCPHSS have worked in collaboration throughout the pandemic to ensure the Thurston County Correctional Facility's quarantine and isolation guidelines are in alignment with the CDC and Washington State Department of Health recommendations. This partnership has ensured the safety and well-being of all staff and detainees in this congregate setting.

Guidance is influenced by factors of our correctional facility, including the unique design and layout of the facility. This facility, like all infrastructures, was not created to address the needs of a pandemic. Dormitory-style living presents additional challenges related to factors that influence disease exposure or transmission within congregate settings.

Thurston County Public Health continues to monitor risks and mitigation measures, refining operations and guidance as we learn what provides the best safety precautions for all members within this congregate setting. Our highest priority is ensuring we are protecting the health and welfare of everyone.

Our Thurston County Health Officer and COVID-19 response team have worked in partnership with the Sheriff's Office to operationalize these recommendations. Preventing the spread of COVID-19 within the facility has led to the development of a COVID-19 screening process at intake. The COVID-19 intake process includes serial testing over 72 hours. We have detected a number of COVID-19 cases both on initial screening and the secondary screening 72 hours after arrival, illustrating the effectiveness of this

mitigation measure in preventing the spread of COVID-19 within the facility. To date, there have not been any COVID-19 outbreaks related to COVID-19 exposures from new arrests at the facility.

TCPHSS is mindful of all stakeholders affected by this situation and wants to ensure the safety of all those involved. Our department is frequently meeting with outside organizations to guarantee community collaboration and gain insight from all stakeholders. TCPHSS and the Sheriff's Office continue to evaluate guidance and restrictions, modifying recommendations as needed.

For more information please see the Board of County Commissioners Work Session *Thurston County Sheriff's Office Jail Booking Restriction Briefing* held Wednesday, October 12, 2022:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDjDMLfp9uQ>

Sincerely,

***Kurt Hardin***

Kurt Hardin (Oct 24, 2022 13:43 PDT)

Kurt Hardin

Interim Director

Thurston County Public Health and Social Services