



Office of the Sheriff

MONROE COUNTY
"ONE TEAM"



Sheriff Todd K. Baxter

Undersheriff Corey K. Brown

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MONROE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE TAKES UNPRECEDENTED MEASURE BY CONDUCTING CORONAVIRUS TESTING FOR 100% OF INMATES IN THE MONROE COUNTY JAIL

*Testing Provides 'Point in Time Survey' as the National Public Health Crisis Increases Daily
Across U.S.*

Rochester, NY (December 8, 2020) – In an unprecedented move, the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, under the leadership of Sheriff Todd Baxter, is conducting 100% Coronavirus testing of inmates inside the Monroe County Jail; an innovative next step to MCSO's proactive testing and quarantine efforts since the pandemic became apparent in March.

"It is clear we have inmate to inmate transmissions of COVID-19 inside the jail," stated Monroe County Sheriff Todd K. Baxter. "I challenged our Jail Bureau Command Staff to be proactive rather than reactive. In a bold move, they suggested this mass testing campaign to adapt to the ever-changing Coronavirus footprint in our country. By testing every single inmate inside of our jail, we will have a clear picture of who is currently infected, working with 'I knows' versus 'what ifs.' Despite our proactive measures exceeding CDC guidelines initiated since the virus began, to include testing and quarantine efforts of inmates and staff that go above and beyond the standards recommended by federal and state public health departments, as well as continuous 24/7 sanitization of our facility, we continue to witness the spread of this disease. Our hope is this 100% testing campaign will stop the spread of the virus and eradicate it inside of our jail."

The mitigation efforts initiated by MCSO in the spring, summer and into early autumn worked well, however the environment surrounding this virus has changed across America and we too must adapt and get creative. The Jail Bureau Command Staff found the capacity to test all inmates and read results, concluding MCSO has the capacity to execute the plan.

We may never know how COVID-19 entered the jail, however this situational awareness developed through mass testing will better guide our agency and direct MCSO on how to proceed. There is no way to get out of

this except through it.

Inmates are placed in jail upon a judge's order. MCSO has no control over when an incarcerated individual leaves the facility, yet our deputies and staff work diligently to provide judges and attorneys needed information as they evaluate who is in custody. We will continue to do so through this process.

PLAN OF ACTION FOR INMATES:

- Testing 100% of the inmate population using phased-in approach (beginning 12/8/20) over the next few days
- All inmates educated by medical personnel prior to testing
- Testing results (which will be public knowledge) will determine where inmates are housed:
 - **COVID-POSITIVE** – COVID-Positive inmates housed together for 21 days
 - **PRESUMPTIVE POSITIVE** – assumed positive and housed together until clear two negative test results in a row over 14-day period
 - **COVID-NEGATIVE** – two tests with negative results
- Inmates determined to have underlying health conditions are currently seen by medical professional at least two times/day
 - Meloni Star Academy (MSA), located in Brighton, NY will likely be utilized to support our efforts
- Prime Care CEO (Medical Contractor) consulted with Sheriff Saturday by phone; flew into Rochester today to assess and develop plan
- Prime Care bringing in teams to administer testing

PLAN OF ACTION FOR ALL STAFF: (Deputies, Civilian Staff, Medical Staff, Mental Health Staff, etc.)

- Any staff experiencing symptoms will not report to work and will be tested
- Staff tested on first day back to work after returning from scheduled day(s) off across all shifts

MCSO'S MITIGATION TACTICS AND PROCEDURES INSIDE MCJ:

- Continuous mass testing campaign for all MCJ Staff planned individually based upon each staff member's work schedule (**NEW**)
- Random mass testing plans being developed for inmate population (**NEW**)
- Due to the current COVID pandemic and the impact on jail operations, MCSO is increasing the ability that inmates have to interact with their families. Inmates are now being provided two free 15-minute phone calls and a free 30 minute video call each week, which is outside the current contract due to the flexibility of Secures. The Sheriff's Office will be working with Monroe County Legislator Rachel Barnhart and the entire County Legislature, as well as County Executive Adam Bello, in the near future as MCSO amends the phone contract to have more flexibility in the number of free calls provided each week. (**NEW**)
- All jail social visitations remain suspended (**No Change**)



- All incoming inmates placed in automatic 14-day quarantine (**No Change**)
- All non-inmate personnel temperature screened upon entry (**No Change**)
- Mandatory masking and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) remain in place for both inmates and staff (**No Change**)
- MCSO works with Monroe County Public Health Department and New York State Commission of Correction to review procedures (**No Change**)

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