



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

# PROBATION DEPARTMENT

## Los Angeles County Probation COVID-19 Weekly Update May 29, 2020

### Juvenile Division

#### Testing of Youth for COVID-19

From May 22 to May 29, 328 youth were tested for COVID-19, almost doubling the amount of youth tested since testing began. As of May 28, all youth currently housed at camps and the Dorothy Kirby Center have been tested for COVID-19, with zero positive results. Testing of all youth in the juvenile halls is underway and on track to be completed next week.

This expanded testing is part of a robust testing regimen throughout Probation juvenile facilities by the Los Angeles County Probation Department and Juvenile Court Health Services (JCHS). Besides testing youth displaying possible COVID-19 symptoms, all youth who are entering and departing juvenile hall are tested for COVID-19. With this testing taking place, camp movement has resumed, pending a youth's negative test.

Out of the 604 tests administered in juvenile facilities since the pandemic began, no youth already inside a juvenile facility has tested positive for COVID-19. Of the 10 youth who have tested positive for COVID-19 (two in the past week), all are from among the population of youth who were entering juvenile hall. One youth at Central Juvenile Hall remains in isolation due to a positive test. Youth testing positive have not been exposed to the facility's general population until cleared by JCHS after a period of isolation and all youth in juvenile facilities are provided with masks.

#### 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 22-May 29, the Los Angeles County juvenile hall population decreased from 355 to 344 and the juvenile residential camp population has risen from 193 to 200 over the same period. Since March 2, the juvenile hall population has decreased by 207 youth, or 37.6% and the juvenile camp population has decreased by 89 youth, or 30.8%.

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 18, 142 youth have been granted an early release by the Court. Probation will continue to meet with Juvenile Court leadership, the Public Defender and the Alternative Public Defender to evaluate court orders.

### **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.

Three Probation employees have tested positive for COVID-19 over the last week. Since the pandemic began, 22 Probation staff that have tested positive for COVID-19. 11 of those staff members work in Juvenile facilities, with eight working at Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall, one at Campus Kilpatrick 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.

The department has continued to partner with JCHS to develop telemedicine services for assessment and consultation by medical staff and to build 24/7 capacity that currently does not exist. On May 26, telemedicine was fully implemented at Probation's camp facilities and the Dorothy Kirby Center.

### **Staffing of Juvenile Facilities**

The Department ensures that all critical security and safety posts are staffed 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.
- Both juvenile halls have received a total of 48 32 oz. bottles of hand sanitizer to be available in each living unit.

- 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.

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**

Conversations with youth continue to be held to alleviate rumors and anxiety about COVID-19. In addition, staff perpetually reinforces 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 is taking place 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**

- Catholic and Protestant services are being live streamed to juvenile halls. Both Catholic Chaplains and Protestant Chaplains have been providing pastoral services as-needed via phone to youth, and have been providing bible study materials (via email) to youth as well.
- 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 has partnered with the Department of Public Health (DPH) to provide nurses (PHNs) who ensure that all placement youth are receiving a proper standard of

health care. Since COVID -19 (March 9, 2020), the team of PHNs have expanded their focus to include daily contact with Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) twice daily and Resource Family once per week to determine if any youth have tested positive for COVID-19.

The average Probation Placement population for the week of May 15 is 368, of which six youth have been tested for COVID-19. All test results have been negative. To date, there have been no known instances of any Probation Placement youth with positive results.

### **Juvenile Services Field Division**

Juvenile Services field staff continue to maintain phone contact with all juvenile probationers and make weekly contacts with high-risk offenders, specifically those under the Intensive Gang Supervision Program. Court officers continue to report daily to juvenile court departments and citation diversion court hearings postponed until further notice.

In addition to providing supervision, staff are also helping families and youth in need. They provide assistance and informational pamphlets/guides on food distribution locations and also deliver food to over 40 families every week. Additionally, youth and caregivers are surveyed to determine the barriers for youth unable to connect with an academic program as well as confirming that the 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.

Adult Services continues to work with the court on the gradual restoration of court services as well as strategizing to open area offices once given approval by the health director. All efforts are being done with client and staff safety as paramount considerations.

### **Communication and Guidance to Public**

The L.A. County Probation Department held a virtual town hall with Department leadership and the community on May 20. To see a recording of the town hall, please visit <https://vimeo.com/421724708>.

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>.



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***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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