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**Milwaukee County House of Correction Announces Changes in COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Efforts**

**MILWAUKEE, WI** – The Milwaukee County House of Correction (HOC) recently conducted facility-wide COVID testing, administering more 1,000 tests last Thursday and Friday. Testing uncovered several dozen positive tests among staff and individuals in HOC care. In response, HOC is immediately implementing risk mitigation efforts to remedy the current outbreak and prevent future spread of COVID-19 in HOC facilities.

COVID testing conducted late last week at HOC facilities found 9 new positive tests among HOC staff and 53 new positive tests among justice involved individuals at HOC. In addition, prior to testing, 50 known positive individuals were transferred to HOC from the Milwaukee County Jail (CJF).

"Maintaining a safe and secure environment is a top priority for both staff and individuals in custody which is reflected in daily practices," said Assistant House of Correction Superintendent Jose Hernandez. "We will continue to do all we can to keep individuals safe and the public informed about our efforts to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus."

Contact tracing remains underway to determine the sources of infection. HOC is taking measures to increase risk mitigation efforts, including interval testing conducted every two weeks for all employees starting shortly after Thanksgiving.

In addition, enhanced contact tracing and stricter health screenings for all in-person employees and contractors will take place immediately. Stricter protocols will also be enacted for the transfer of individuals from CJF to HOC. HVAC enhancements to decrease the spread of the airborne virus and increased disinfecting measures will take place as soon as possible.

Lastly, changes to meeting protocols between justice involved individuals and external staff will emphasize tele-meeting and, if necessary, advise physical spaces that allow for appropriate distancing.

Milwaukee County will continue to provide updates online via a COVID testing dashboard with test results of individuals in the care of the County and staff at congregate living facilities. Information is available to the public at <https://county.milwaukee.gov/EN/COVID-19/Individuals-in-County-Care>

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