



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT of
**CORRECTIONS AND
REHABILITATION**

**CALIFORNIA
PRISON HEALTH
CARE SERVICES**



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Prison System Resumes Visiting at Adult and Community Correctional Facilities

Focus remains on containment of H1N1 virus

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and California Prison Health Care Services (CPHCS) today announced that effective Friday, May 15, all correctional facilities will resume their normal visiting schedule, ending restrictions imposed due to the H1N1 virus. Added precautions at CDCR institutions to contain the spread of H1N1 will continue.

“The Receiver, after very careful consideration and after monitoring CDCR’s progress with H1N1 response, has given us the green light to re-open visitation,” said CDCR Undersecretary Scott Kernan. “However, the best way to deal with an outbreak is to avoid one, which is why all staff and inmates will continue to exercise good public health practices, and take all precautions to prevent the spread of H1N1.”

Visitation and non-essential activities were halted at all CDCR institutions on May 3, 2009, following the detection of a probable H1N1 case at Centinela State Prison. The first probable case was confirmed on May 6. On May 11, a CDCR inmate housed in the Florence Correctional Center in Arizona was diagnosed with the H1N1 virus. Given the absence of suspected cases within juvenile facilities, all visiting restrictions at Division of Juvenile Justice facilities were lifted on May 8.

“We are encouraged by the fact that there are no signs of additional transmission at the institution where the first confirmed case surfaced. Tests also show that there are no new confirmed cases of H1N1 within the prison system. I attribute that to fast and effective action by our medical and custody staff throughout the state,” said Dr. Dwight Winslow, CPHCS Acting Chief Medical Officer. “Our policy of withholding visitation, screening all new prisoners, promptly isolating anyone with symptoms and encouraging symptomatic staff to stay home and go see their personal physicians, appears to have helped avoid a potentially dangerous situation. Now, I feel confident that by implementing important precautions we will be able to safely reopen visitation.”

CDCR and the Receiver’s office are continuing to monitor a number of suspected cases and are awaiting test results. CDCR will continue to work closely with medical staff and public health partners to ensure every effort is made to protect

the health of staff, offenders and the public. The restriction on visiting could be reinstated if conditions change.

“We now have more information about this disease and our ability to control the spread of infection than we had just one week ago,” said Dr. Janet Mohle-Boetani, CPHCS Chief Medical Officer of the Public Health Unit. “Earlier, we didn’t know how severe the confirmed cases would be and we didn’t know if we would be able to effectively contain the spread of infections in our overcrowded institutions. Now, we know that the illnesses have been mild. And, by taking appropriate precautions, such as increased hand washing, and isolation of ill persons, we can limit the spread of H1N1 infections that are introduced into our institutions.”

The annual “Get on the Bus” event, bringing children to visit their incarcerated family members, will be rescheduled for Friday, June 26 at California Institution for Women, Central California Women’s Facility and Valley State Prison for Women.

“We would like to thank all of the friends and families for their patience and support during this difficult time,” said Undersecretary Kernan. “We appreciate your understanding that the decision to stop visitation was one of precaution, and safety for staff, inmates and the public. We plan to monitor this closely, for as long as is needed.”

All other visiting procedures and guidelines will be in effect. Visitors are encouraged to refer to the CDCR visitation website:

<http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Visitors/index.html>. For the latest information, visit CDCR’s H1N1 Resources page regularly at: <http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/H1N1>.

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