



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**March 12, 2020**

## **Department of Corrections Cancels Visits Statewide, Begins Enhanced Screenings of ALL Employees**

**Harrisburg, PA** – Following Gov. Tom Wolf’s announcement earlier today of mitigation measures in Pennsylvania, Department of Corrections Secretary John Wetzel announced that, effective tomorrow, March 13, and for a period of 14 days, inmate visits at all state correctional institutions are cancelled.

In addition, all state correctional institutions will perform enhanced screening of all staff, vendors and contracted providers, including contracted chaplains. Just yesterday, Sec. Wetzel announced enhanced screenings at the State Correctional Institution (SCI) at Phoenix, which is located in Montgomery County.

“As a result of the mitigation measures outlined by Gov. Wolf today, beginning tomorrow, March 13, ALL essential employees – no matter where they live -- are required to report to work,” Wetzel said. “Our goal, in addition to delaying the impact of this virus on our system, is to continue normal operation of our system. To focus on that goal, we need to limit who enters our facilities and focus on critical functions.”

Wetzel said he understands the impact that canceling visits could have on inmates and their families and friends, and he said DOC officials are working to increase phone time, commissary order limits, among other things. Prison officials will work to educate staff and inmates about the changes everyone will experience.

“We are all in this together,” Wetzel said. “So, together we are going to work to mitigate the virus’ impact on our state prison system.”

Enhanced screening protocol includes taking one’s temperature and asking a series of questions.

“No matter who you are, if you have flu-like symptoms and/or a temperature of 100.4 degrees or more, you will not be allowed entrance to any of our DOC facilities or offices,” Wetzel said.

“We are closely monitoring our entire system and individual facilities daily,” Wetzel said. “We are taking steps to protect our employees and our inmates.”

For the most up-to-date information on the coronavirus, please visit [here](#).