

MONROE CORRECTIONAL COMPLEX COVID-19 OUTBREAK: INSIDE REPORT

Marco [REDACTED]

This report is to inform our community members about the Department of Corrections' response to the ongoing Covid-19 Outbreak here at MCC. We hope that in doing so, we can gain your essential support to create meaningful change in the protocols DOC has been following. This account is to the best of my recollection, as well as those personal handwritten experiences attached.

Friday November 19, 2021: During the evening a prisoner at TRU-A Unit declares a Medical Emergency because he was having breathing difficulties. After he was taken to the infirmary he was transferred to the so-called Quarantine Unit (QU) at the Washington State Reformatory (WSR) Intensive Management Unit (IMU), also known as the "hole." Most likely the Medical staff became aware that he was Covid-19 Positive, otherwise why would he be transferred to the WSR-IMU-QU? If they even suspected that he was infected the obvious next step should've been to place TRU-A Unit under lockdown to prevent a bigger outbreak. However, things were treated as normal until Monday November 22, 2021. Meaning that there was no restriction on movement during the entire weekend.

Monday November 22, 2021: After lunch everyone was sent to their Unit from all program activities. Medical and Correctional Staff conducted a Covid test to all TRU-A Unit, and possibly to the other Units (B, C, and D). Once the testing period was done, we were let out to our dayrooms but we were restricted to movement within our Units only.

Tuesday November 23, 2021: During the evening we are placed under complete lockdown and some people is transferred to the IMU-QU. They were told to pack a few food and hygiene items, reading and writing material. "Everything else would be provided to them (clothes, linen, etc.)"

Wednesday November 24, 2021: In the morning our doors are unlocked and activities seem to be normal within the Unit, at least. After lunch another Covid test is conducted.

Thursday November 25, 2021: Because we were isolated to our Unit, we were unable to know what exactly was taken place in the other Units. We heard that the other Units were isolated like us. It meant that we couldn't communicate with them. Inside the units, however, movement was open. At 3:45 pm we locked down for "Count Time" as usual but we were not able to come out for dinner, it was served in our cells. At around 6 pm, I was told to "pack up" because I was getting transferred to IMU-QU. In total it was twenty-plus people that were transferred that night.

Friday November 26, 2021: People continued to be transferred from TRU to the IMU-QU and WSR-C Unit. People that was asymptomatic were transferred from IMU-QU to WSR-C Unit. It seems that the administration decided to use WSR-C Unit as an isolation Unit for those with no

symptoms. To make it clear to the reader, all those in IMU-QU were dealing with serious hardships as you can read in the attached letters. Medical staff was doing walkthroughs a few times a day to do temperature checks. When they were asked about the Covid test results or pretty much anything they would say that "they didn't know." As for the Correctional Officers (C.Os.), they were pretty much ignoring people's requests for blankets, shower rolls, and denying showers because according to them the CDC guidelines recommended no shower for up to seven days. Some C.Os. allowed some people to shower, but it was the exception. Cleaning supplies to clean the filthy cells we were placed on, were also denied. As the reader can imagine, this conditions are terrible especially if you are going through the sickness. A physical and psychological hardship no one should have to endure. No matter what.

Saturday November 27, 2021: They (MCC) continued moving people from One unit to another. The prisoners that were transferred to WSR-C Unit, the first wave of many to go, created a crew to clean the entire Unit and find cleaning supplies, mattresses and linen. They took charge of the situation and were able to help all the new arrivals from IMU-QU and TRU during the following days. The WSR-C Unit was empty for months and it was reopened due to the Covid outbreak. People were unable to have any kind of recreation, staff said it was a Quarantined Unit too.

Sunday November 28, 2021: Something that made no sense was that a group of people was moved to another section of the WSR-QU, still not providing cleaning supplies to clean the filthy cells, a matter that had everyone mad about.

Monday November 29, 2021: More people is transferred to and from the IMU-QU. The situation regarding the cleaning supplies, clean clothes and shower rolls continued to be ignored by the staff.

Tuesday November 30, 2021: A group of about twenty, which I'm part of, is transferred from IMU-Qu to the WSR-C Unit. We were very, very, thankful to find a welcoming group that provided us with some old socks, towels, briefs. and shirts that they've found and we were able to hand-wash them in the shower. We were also given some generic hygiene (soap, toothpaste, etc.)

Wednesday December 1, 2021: The transferring of people from one place to another continued. we had four new arrivals from IMU-QU. Laundry became a problem since washing it by hand is not enough. Mops, dust mops, cleaning rags and other cleaning supplies are scarce and staff is ignoring this problems. Their favorite answer to all our requests is "I don't know" and "I was forced to work overtime, I'm just a C.O." The Unit sergeants were in the same situation. Their job is security, not running the laundry or things of this nature. As a collective, we kept asking to speak with the pearson/s above, especially Mr. John Padilla and Mrs. Michelle Wood, the so-called Incident Commanders at that time. We understood that they were the ones who created this plan and therefore the conditions we found ourselves in. They never came, or acknowledge any of our requests.

Thursday December 3, 2021: The communication between prisoners and staff is very fractured due to broken promises and the coarse language used from both sides. The movement within the Unit was very restrictive which is causing a great amount of stress and resentment for us and staff too. This was the pattern for the following days, unanswered and ignored questions.

Friday December 3, 2021: The people that arrived in the first wave were able to order commissary on Monday which they received today, something that was very welcomed since the food we are being fed could hardly be called "food." As for the other issues, we are still trying to get answers, and people is still arriving from IMU-QU and TRU as well.

Tuesday December 7, 2021: Mostly, the first wave of people that came to WSR-C Unit was transferred today to WSR-B Unit.

Wednesday December 8, 2021: Here in WSR-C Unit we received the visit of CUS Ms. O'connor, who got back from her vacations. I personally spoke to her along with other people we explained to her all of the issues and frustrations we had, which I'm sure she witnessed. She was able to help us get some cleaning supplies (disinfectant, mops, rags, etc.). She wasn't able to compromise with our needed laundry, but she said she would do everything she could. Another concern we had was our commissary, since the food we were being fed was uneatable, for different reasons. We weren't able to order however. Lieutenant Wood was able to get some commissary items from out TRU cells. But overall this took a great amount of pressure from the population, we were speaking about a hunger strike and other possibilities! This was the true reason why we were listened to.

On the other hand, because our population from TRU is "non-comparable" with the population from WSR-A Unit, and since the "Incident Command" completely neglected or was indifferent to the nature of both populations, a prisoners from TRU was assaulted by one from WSR-A Unit the very moment the two Units came into contact.(See Adrian Estrada's account). Of course the administration stopped the interaction between the two units, but the damage was done.

Thursday December 9, 2021: Another wave of people is transferred to WSR-B Unit, which includes me. We were happy to move because we were now able to go to recreation and finally breathe some fresh air. However, people were still being treated the same in WSR-C Unit, IMU-QU, and TRU. People was suffering at MCC, we all knew that. Laundry was not being done and the shortage of supplies added to the indifference of the staff created a very difficult and challenging (risky) environment. The communication across the Complex can not be called communication.

Friday December 10, 2021: Fourteen guys are transferred from IMU-QU to the WSR-B Unit. They were very happy to get out of the "Hole"

Saturday December 11, 2021: WSR-B Unit is place under lockdown. No information is given. We understood that we were going to start quarantine all over again, because we suspected that someone who came
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yesterday from IMU-QU was sick. Everyone was infuriated! Out of the approximately 70 people in our unit, 65 refused to eat dinner and started screaming "food strike! Food strike!" As the reader can imagine, the environment was very tense. The C.Os. didn't know what to do or say. After dinner was rejected the C.Os. started calling individuals to the exit of the Unit. Everyone was asking "for what?" And if they "should pack up their little property?" The staff said "no." But soon, we realized that it was a trick to take guys back to the IMU-QU. We also saw that the ones being called were the ones that came the day before. Some of them were able to pack up their property after realizing this, but there was a confrontation between one guy and the C.Os. because he was frustrated about he move, but angry and fed up with the lies! He told them "just tell me to pack up and that I'm moving back to IMU-QU, don't lie to me and tell me you just want to talk." This situation could've gotten very serious. Eventually the fourteen guys were moved back to IMU-QU. They also took a guy who had been with my 'wave' all along, but he never tested positive! He was exposed to the virus with us and did get sick overthere. He had to spend over two weeks in IMU-QU after already been there (see Jessie Guerrero story). I guess the "food strike" worked because the so-called "incedent Command" moved these guys out instead of placing the entire Unit in lockdown. We were able to return to our "normal activities" the next day.

Tuesday December 14, 2021: The CUS Ms. O'connor and two other persons came to see how things were. After Ms. O'connor tried to answer people's questions, we were trying to figure out who the two persons were? When someone ask one of them if he was from Ombuds, he said "maybe" and walked away. Another guy asked him what was his name and he responded with "you don't need to know that." So when they were ready to leave, we asked them firmly "what was their business in the unit and why bother showing up if they gonna look at their phones the entire time! One of them said he was from Olympia and the other said he was "training" for something. We pointed out to the "Olympia" guy the issues with laundry, property, treatment at IMU-QU and I asked if "food strikes" would be the only was to be heard. He said, "that does not work, it only makes things worse, look at what happened with January 6th." I told him that this had nothing to do with the "riot at the Capitol" and that we needed answers from Olympia and to make sure his superiors understood what was going on in here. Our laundry was done once a week, but keep in mind that most of us only had a couple of items to change. Everyone was washing their clothes in the shower. Also, the following days, there was a positive case in the WSR-A Unit and our Unit took jobs in the kitchen for two weeks, we were able to eat some decent meals with out hesitation. Christmas and New Year's Eve was challenging for all of us. We received the New Year banging on the bars and wishing eachother a better year.

Friday January 7, 2022: For the past few days we were hearing that we we may be able to go back to TRU. Today we did. Everyone went back, and things seemed to be going back to the "new normal"

Sunday January 9, 2022: The entire TRU population is tested.

Wednesday January 12, 2022: TRU-A Unit CUS, Susan Collins comes into the unit to soothe us prior to first count (10:30 am), lots of anxiety in the unit because there was no movement all morning, no recreation and the kitchen workers who were told they'll be working for the first time today were suddenly not to come in. We saw TRU-C Unit had positive cases, and when Mrs. Collins was questioned regarding the reason for the lockdown, first we're told TRU is understaffed, and all TRU was limited movement. But this was rebutted because only our unit was limited, besides C Unit. Then she tells us that it's because TRU is waiting for test results from Sunday, but again is rebutted by the fact that we are the only unit. The 10 am meeting with her had all people discussing this and as soon as we were locked down for count, we were told the Unit had two positive cases. After mainline these two people were taken to quarantine in SOU.

Thursday January 13, 2022: Someone was taken from TRU-B Unit to QU. We also received a visit from Internal Investigator Maria, who came to "hear" our concerns. I personally expressed to her and those around that she was here "testing the waters" since for the last few days or so people have been considering hunger strikes, sit-ins, and even refusing to be transferred to the QU given the conditions in there. Of course this is something she disagreed with. WE WERE ALSO INFORMED that people who tested positive will now go to the "new" QU in TRU-E Unit (a unit with limited cells, and non-drinkable water, no power or recreation), and if it got full, they would put two people in a cell. This news caused much controversy, especially with the guys who currently have a single-man cell. To us, this doesn't make any sense. I guess our meeting was another attempt to make things right from both parts, we certainly would like to think so. If they are just doing it to pacify us or get some time, only time will tell. We were also told that the superintendent, Jack Warner would come see us tomorrow. As soon as we ended our meeting and we locked down for count at 10:30am the guys in TRU-A Unit (A-wing) had a "sit-in" in the Dayroom refusing to lockdown. They insisted on getting answers about recreation. The Captain. William Frantz, was able to come to terms with them. We had a yard schedule by Lunch.

At around 12 pm. the entire TRU-A Unit refused the temperature checks, this was mainly due to the frustration people felt. Nothing seemed to be going in the right direction. People is fed up with the lies and the unanswered questions.

Friday January 14, 2022: Mr. Warner didn't show up. TRU-A unit was tested (PCR), those who tested positive in the last 90 day were given a Rapid Test.

In the afternoon, TRU-D Unit was placed in lockdown, moments later the Correctional Industries Kitchen Staff came to the unit looking for people to work, since the worker in D unit were on lockdown.

Things are very flexible when it comes to making people work for the Correctional Industries, Something I want to point out.

Saturday January 15, 2022: At about 4 am kitchen workers are awoken to take a rapid test. It seems no one failed the test since they all went to work.

At around 10am, Mr. Jack Warner came to "talk" to us, employing the same placating tactics that Ms. Maria (I&I), who was also present, and Ms. Collins had been doing all week: empathizing (we understand your frustrations, we are frustrated too.) and blaming higher-ups in Olympia for everything (these directives come from Olympia, if it was up to me i would be doing such and such). It was almost 30 min. of us airing our grievances and conveying our anxieties over how terrible the conditions were when we were taken there sick, and how no assurances have been given that conditions would be better. In fact, we were told that conditions would be even worse, as they said that we would be double-bunked if TRU-E unit gets full. I made emphasis on one of the guys that was taken on the 12th, who had been asking for pain medication and Medical staff failed to provided. His brother who is in this unit also, spoke to our CUS about the matter. She placed a complaint and said she would try to fix it. Mr. Warner didn't have answers to this questions, which can't be blamed on "Olympia. I just want to show the reader how the conditions are in the so-called QU. Mr. Warner also said that Daniel White is our superintendent, no him. Since Mr. Daniel While is part of the "incident Command" we keep wondering why Mr. White hasn't been able to show his face and try to answer some of these concerns?

It appears to us in here that the MCC Administration is blaming Olympia. Mr. Warner kept saying that he gets three phonecalls from daily from Olympia and gets the recommendations from Dr. Lara Strick, who lead the "cleanical Team."

Monday January 17, 2022: Two guys in this unit "turned themselves in" because they were feeling sick. It took about two hours for the medical staff to place them in quarantine status in their current cells.

To the reader, our hope in writing and sharing these experiences is that you see ho the DOC has and keeps mismanaging the Covid outbreak at MCC. We hope you can help us achieve change, and save someone's life potentially.

The recent message from Cheryl Strange, DOC Secretary, is that she want [us] to be safe...while [we] are on her care and custody." And that "as we move forward this year [the] Clinical Team, led by Dr. Lara Strick will be working directly with the Department of Health and Center for Disease Control Congregate Care division to make the best health-based recommendations possible"

We are tired of hearing meaningless words from the DOC Adm. They've lied to us and you many times that they now lack any serious credibility. We want them to listen to us not to argue or rebut, but to understand our situation and take the right measures needed. We are not "Medical Experts," but based on our very real recent experience,

we know that the best and safest way to manage this outbreak here at TRU is to keep people in their current cells, not to move them. Here, we can at least look out for each other. Accommodations can easily be made for time-out for showers and telephone access. As you can read, in the case of Mr. Jim Ru [REDACTED], we can take better care of our fellow prisoners than the staff, who in the case of Mr. Ru [REDACTED] threw his kites and grievances! This 71-year-old was found unconscious by a fellow-prisoner and told the staff that he needed medical attention. Mr. Ru [REDACTED] is now even afraid to say anything, he does not want to go back to the QU. Who can blame him? He may not come back the next time. I could go on and on, but you can read for yourself in their individual accounts.

Another thing that hasn't been spoken much is the fact that the C.Os themselves have expressed their concern about this situation, they won't confront "DOC" because they'll get fired. But in case you didn't know, DOC is dealing with a shortage of staff which is due to the vaccine mandate and now with the management of the outbreak. DOC can't handle any more staff quitting. But the overwhelming amount of pressure on them to "enforce" the recommendations of Dr. Lara Strick and Cheryl Strange and all the DOC bureaucrats is creating an unsafe environment and the sentiment of quitting. We, the prisoners suffering the impact of these decisions directly understand this, and see the clear mismanagement of the situation. We chose to speak up! We invite the DOC workers all across the state to do the same.

This is what we want DOC to do regarding the Covid-19 Outbreak:

- Implement the same flu protocols to the Covid virus. Meaning that we want to state in our current a cell. Every correctional has a different setting, DOC can't keep applying the same CDC Congregate protocols to every prison. This is not "science-base" or "health-care-based".
- If, and only if absolutely necessary, those who are moved to a QU must be given:
 - Proper medical supervision.
 - Provide with a daily shower.
 - Clean clothes.
 - Clean and DAILY shower roll.
 - Clean linen and mattress
 - Proper and enough daily cleaning supplies.
 - ! hour (nothing less) out of the cell with phone access.
 - Opportunity to order commissary once per week.
 - Access to reading material.
 - Make sure their meals are warm, safe to eat, not tampered with.
- An appropriate test for each individual in QU and automatically provide them with the results as soon as possible.
- Daily memorandum providing a proper update on the status.
- Fair treatment from Medical and Correctional staff.
- Don't keep anyone over 7 days in quarantine, unless absolutely necessary. The CDC now recommends a 5-day isolation period. Update your protocols!

To our readers. You can help us by contacting the following persons and tell them to follow our suggestions. We will all appreciate your time and help in this very important matter. Thank you

Cheryl Strange, DOC secretary

Lara Strick, DOC's Cleanical Team leader.

Daniel W. White, MCC-TRU Superintendent

Jack Warner, MCC-WSR Superintendent

Michelle Wood, MCC-TRU Assoc. Superintendent/Incident Command

Rachel Symon, MCC Health Services Incident Command

Ken Bratten, MCC Lt. INcident Comand

Your legislators.



COMPLAINT FORM

CHECK ONE: Initial Emergency Appeal Rewrite

First Middle DOC number Facility/Office Unit/Cell
 [Redacted] Marco [Redacted] WSR [Redacted]

WHO (names) or WHO (names) of grievant(s):
 C UNIT QUARANTINE MANAGEMENT

LOCATION of incident grievant DATE of incident TIME of incident
 WSR C UNIT 12/08/2021 N/A

WHO (names) or WHO (names) of grievant(s):
 Most WSR - 3 unit offenders

SHORT DESCRIPTION of what happened and how it affected you (ONE issue per grievance):
 The mismanagement of the Covid 19 outbreak at TRU/WSR IMU/C UNIT
 From the beginning, on Nov. 25 2021, I was transferred to an WSR-IMU dirty cell with no cleaning supplies, shower roll or any information. I had to endure the virus in these conditions (with no shower some days). On Nov 28 I was again move to another WSR IMU dirty cell and finally transferred to WSR C unit on Nov. 30. I haven't been able to order store or receive a decent change of clothes since day one. Lundry isn't being done, the only reason this unit is running is because of the effort and work of the inmates. It's time for the WSR/TRU ADM. to do what's required in order for me to be able to have clean lundry and get commissary this week. I was informed through the unit Rep that I'll get store this week by [Redacted] th [Redacted] informed today. I was also told I'll get lundry this week.

SUGGESTED REMEDY:
 Process order of store and wndry. immed [Redacted] y

MANDATORY SIGNATURE: [Signature] 12/08/2021

GRIEVANCE COORDINATOR'S RESPONSE:	Facility/Office Received	Date Received
THIS IS NOT LIFE THREATENING.	MCC/WSR	12-9-21

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Formal grievance/appeal paperwork being prepared | <input type="checkbox"/> Rewrite (see below) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sent to: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Informally resolved | • Return in 5 working days or by _____ | • Date sent: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> You didn't attend callout | <input type="checkbox"/> No rewrite received | • Date received: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administratively withdrawn | <input type="checkbox"/> You requested to withdraw | <input type="checkbox"/> Not grievable |
| | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not acceptable |

Comments: Your concerns listed here were forwarded to MCC Incident Command For review /action. Laundry & cleaning supplies should be available on the units. This should now be resolved. Moving & no store are part of restrictions outlined in WAC 246-100-040 & therefore is Not Accepted by resolution for review. To pursue, you can resubmit a list only the cell conditions & laundry conditions. I facility & date

Coordinator (print) range per frm - B. Blair	Coordinator (signature) B Blair	Date 1/10/22
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