



SANTA BARBARA COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT

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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INSTITUTION STAFF ASSIGNED TO SANTA MARIA JUVENILE HALL TESTS COVID-19 POSITIVE

(SANTA MARIA, CA) – Chief Probation Officer Tanja Heitman reported today that a support staff assigned to the Santa Barbara Probation Department's Santa Maria Juvenile Hall (SMJH) notified the Department they tested positive for COVID-19 on December 18, 2020.

The Probation Department has a comprehensive COVID-19 Management Plan that addresses this situation. Employees and contractors are required to submit to temperature and health questionnaire screening prior to entering the facility and have been directed not to come to work ill. In this case, the staff left the facility early after feeling mild symptoms and tested with their personal physician which subsequently returned positive. The staff continues to experience mild symptoms, but is self-isolating at home and stable. The Department conducted contact tracing and determined only one additional staff was potentially exposed; no youth, contract or other personnel were contacted. The staff consistently wore a face mask while on duty and will not be returning to work until a sufficient quarantine period has occurred.

The Probation Department remains focused on being responsive to the mental and physical well-being of youth, staff and contractors during this challenging and stressful situation, and is taking steps to ensure their wellness. The Department is continuing to make decisions based on best practices in health and safety standards for the youth under their care, their officers, and the community. Everyone is encouraged to visit the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department website at <https://publichealthsb.org/> for more information on COVID-19. For more information about the County of Santa Barbara Probation Department, go to www.sbprobation.org.

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