



## SANTA BARBARA COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT

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# PRESS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **STAFF AND YOUTH WITHIN PROBATION'S CUSTODY FACILITIES TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19**

**(SANTA MARIA, CA)** – Chief Probation Officer Tanja Heitman reported today that in unrelated events, two staff assigned to the Santa Barbara Probation Department's Santa Maria Juvenile Hall (SMJH) and two staff assigned to the Los Prietos Boys Camp (LPBC) tested positive for COVID-19. Additionally, two youth tested positive when booked into SMJH.

The Probation Department has a comprehensive COVID-19 Management Plan that addresses these situations. In the first case, on January 9, 2021, the Department was notified by a staff assigned to SMJH they received a positive test result for COVID-19. The staff last worked on January 3. After conducting contract tracing, identified staff and youth were tested as a precaution. All test results for youth and staff have returned negative.

In a separate incident, on January 9, 2021, the Department was notified by two staff assigned to the LPBC they received a positive test result for COVID-19. The exposures were unrelated. One of the staff last worked on January 2 and the other staff last worked on December 29, 2020. After conducting contract tracing, identified staff and youth were tested as a precaution. All test results for youth and staff have returned negative.

On January 10, 2021, a youth was booked into SMJH by a local Law Enforcement Agency who notified staff during the booking process the youth tested positive for COVID-19 while at the hospital being medically cleared before transporting the youth to SMJH. The youth was immediately transferred to a medical observation unit specifically used for positive COVID youth where they remain asymptomatic. No additional contact tracing or testing was required due to the adherence to existing COVID protocols.

On January 11, 2021, the Department was notified by a staff assigned to SMJH they received a positive test result for COVID-19. The staff tested on January 8 and last worked on December 31, so there is no potential work-related exposures and no need to conduct additional contact tracing or testing.

On January 11, 2021, the Department was notified by the medical unit that a youth in custody at SMJH received a positive test result for COVID-19. The youth was tested as part of the normal booking process. To ensure minimal contact with staff and no contact with other youth from the time booked until the test results were received, the youth was on medical isolation status pending the test results per procedure. The youth was transferred and is being housed in a medical observation unit specifically used for positive COVID youth where they remain asymptomatic. No additional contact tracing or testing was required due to the adherence to existing COVID protocols.

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](http://www.sbprobation.org).

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