



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, one staff member assigned to the Santa Barbara Probation Department's Santa Maria Juvenile Hall (SMJH) and one staff member assigned to the Los Prietos boys Camp (LPBC) tested positive for COVID-19. Additionally, one youth tested positive when booked into SMJH.

The Probation Department has a comprehensive COVID-19 Management Plan that addresses this situation. In the first case, on January 13, 2021, the Department was notified by a staff member assigned to SMJH they received a positive test result for COVID-19. The staff tested on January 11, 2021, with their personal physician and last worked on December 17, 2020, so there were no potential work-related exposures and no need to conduct additional contact tracing or testing.

On January 14, 2021, the Department was notified by a staff member assigned to LPBC they received a positive test result for COVID-19. The staff tested on January 11, 2021, with their personal physician and last worked on November 24, 2020, so again there were no work-related exposures and no need to conduct additional contact tracing or testing.

On January 14, 2021, the Department was notified by its medical unit that one 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, the youth has been on medical isolation status from the time booked until the test results were received. The youth was transferred and is being housed in a medical observation unit specifically used for positive COVID-19 youth and is experiencing minor symptoms. After conducting contact tracing, identified staff were tested as a precaution and their results returned negative.

It is of note that the last four youth booked into SMJH have all tested positive for COVID-19. The youth are not connected in any way, are from different areas of the county, including north, south, and mid-county regions. The increase in positive cases during booking appears to demonstrate how widespread COVID-19 is in our community right now and exemplifies the need for everyone to continue to be vigilant about

following all COVID-19 precautions, including staying home whenever possible, maintaining at least 6 feet of social distancing, hand sanitizing, and wearing facial coverings.

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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