

Dept. of Corrections: Offering vaccination during visitation

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Madison, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) is offering free COVID-19 vaccination to those visiting loved ones at some state correctional facilities.

In-person visitation resumed at DOC institutions on July 6 for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic forced the suspension of in-person visits and other operations in March 2020. Doses are being offered to vaccine-eligible people coming for an in-person visit at six DOC facilities: Fox Lake Correctional Institution, Green Bay Correctional Institution, Kettle Moraine Correctional Institution, Racine Youthful Offender Correctional Facility, Stanley Correctional Institution and Taycheedah Correctional Institution.

“We want to make it as easy as possible for the people of Wisconsin to become vaccinated against COVID-19,” said DOC Secretary Kevin Carr. “The ease of availability, having vaccine available at a site to which you are already travelling, is something this administration hopes people do not pass up.”

In Wisconsin, 58.8% of the state’s 18-and-older population has been fully vaccinated. The rate is even higher in DOC institutions, with 67.2% of the Department’s eligible population fully vaccinated and the number increasing to 96% for those who have not declined vaccination. There are currently two active cases of COVID-19 among people in DOC care.

“Vaccination is the best tool we have to protect ourselves, family members and loved ones from COVID-19,” said DHS Secretary-designee Karen Timberlake. “The level of vaccination rates we are seeing in Wisconsin communities have allowed in-person visitation to resume safely in DOC facilities. However, COVID-19 is still

infecting unvaccinated people across our state, so we are working to make sure everyone who still needs a COVID-19 vaccine is able to get one. We are using all available avenues to make vaccination as easy as possible, including offering free COVID-19 vaccination during visits.”

People who sign up for an in-person visit at the six identified facilities will be asked if they want a vaccine while there. The vaccine will be administered by DOC Health Services staff.

Since resuming in-person visits this week, most DOC institutions report visitation running at about 50-75% of capacity, with some higher. Special rules are in place to protect against COVID-19 transmission during visits and, if COVID-19 cases in a specific DOC facility or surrounding community begin to rise, face-to-face visitation may be suspended again at that facility.