



Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office

700 East Fourth Street
Charlotte, NC 28202

T (704) 336-2543 • F (704) 336-6118

www.mecksheriff.com

Garry L. McFadden
Sheriff

Rodney M. Collins
Chief Deputy Sheriff

Telisa E. White
Chief of Detention

Jason R. Beebe
Chief Deputy Sheriff

MEDIA ALERT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Chief Deputy Rodney M. Collins

Rodney.Collins@mecknc.gov

O: (980) 314-5851

M: (704) 622-4009

Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office Lifts Detention Center Lockdown Following an Increase in Positive COVID 19 Cases

(CHARLOTTE, NC) – The facility wide lockdown at Mecklenburg County Detention Center-Central has been lifted after the recent spike in COVID cases following the Thanksgiving holiday. MCSO completed rapid testing this past Saturday of all staff working at Detention Center-Central with a total of 22 staff testing positive from the 768 rapid tests performed. Of those staff who did test positive, all were asymptomatic and reported to work feeling fine and completely unaware that they were infected with the virus. We have also completed all contact tracing to determine potential exposures by those positive staff to other staff and residents, and as a result we now have 477 residents in Respiratory Isolation (including 157 who have active cases of COVID-19 – up 50 since our press release last Thursday).

Our healthcare provider, Wellpath, has well managed the care of all COVID-positive residents within the facility, providing high-quality care and treatment. No resident has required hospitalization or ventilator support and we have experienced no COVID-related deaths.

MCSO continues to learn from our experience and by now exceeding CDC guidance for testing we are able to mitigate the spread of infection much better. Aggressive contact tracing and rapid testing technology have enabled us more quickly to identify asymptomatic carriers before they are able to spread the infection to others.

Though the future remains unpredictable, our modeling analysis suggests a potential plateau of active cases in the detention center this week. MCSO recognizes the stress that the pandemic has placed on our residents and we are working to maintain open lines of communication so that they understand the current state of affairs within the facility and why they are being tested. We have benefitted from the cooperation of our residents and that has played a large role in our ability to keep the situation from being far worse.

In the words of Sheriff McFadden, “While one case of COVID-19 in our facility is one case too many – be it a resident or a member the staff – I remain impressed by and grateful for the dedication and commitment of our medical team and detention officers in the management of the current outbreak. We’re not out of the woods just yet, but we can see the light through the trees now. Hopefully this week will bring better news, and the lessons learned – our new rapid testing protocols in particular – will serve us well if and when we are faced with another outbreak down the road.”

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