



The FRAKES Files

20-19

Director Scott R. Frakes
September 26, 2020

Dear NDCS Teammates,

It has been a difficult year for us, and perhaps even more so for our brothers and sisters in law enforcement. Our jobs are hard enough on the best of days. Add in the stress of a pandemic, and the feeling that most people do not understand the nature of the work that we do – it can make our mission even more challenging.

I am here to tell you, there are many people who care about us and all the others who make public safety their calling. Better yet, there are incredibly generous people here in Nebraska who want us to know we are valued. The team at Burlington Capitol in Omaha decided to show their support by delivering 2,500 notebook and pen sets for everyone at NDCS. We are in the process of getting the notebooks/pens handed out to all of you over the next week. The significance of this gift is the show of support from community members. I have been doing this work for a long time, and I have never experienced community support and generosity like what we see in Nebraska.

As we approach the end of the seventh month of dealing with a pandemic, it is clear the end is not yet in sight. We have learned a great deal in that time. Most importantly, we have learned that we must remain flexible as we work through each new situation. This means asking and answering lots of questions, continuing to challenge assumptions, staying current on the latest information, and being willing/able to explain why yesterday's decisions are no longer applicable. You have all done excellent work, and I know this will continue in the months ahead. It will be challenging to maintain the focus and consistency critical to our success, but it is what we must do.

Yet another challenge is heading our way. Influenza season is upon us. At this point, we do not have any clear prediction about the severity of the 2020-2021 flu season. The strategies used to limit the spread of COVID are the same strategies that will reduce the spread of the flu. There are some indications the countries with aggressive COVID strategies are experiencing lower flu infection rates, but it is too soon to draw a definitive cause and effect conclusion. What we do know is that the symptoms of COVID and influenza are very similar. This is likely to increase the need for quarantining, testing and isolation in all of our facilities. I got my flu shot, and I encourage each of you to do the same.

We are all tired, and some of you are probably experiencing some level of exhaustion. I need each of you to reach down deep, and make an effort to get everyone in your facility engaged around minimizing the introduction and spread of COVID and influenza. The teams at NSP and DEC/LCC have done an excellent job of managing significant outbreaks, just like CCCO did back in May. Each of those outbreaks have taught us things that we can apply to the next outbreak. The best scenario would be to avoid any additional outbreaks. If you know folks who work in NSP and DEC/LCC, take a moment to reach out to them. A few encouraging words will go a long way.

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The Governor's observations about how well we have managed the pandemic were right on the mark. We are fighting the introduction and spread of a microscopic particle inside an environment that resists our best efforts. We have done excellent work so far. We cannot relax those efforts any time soon. I thank each of you for your hard work and dedication. Someday we will look back on all of this and be able to say, "I remember when." We will marvel at the excellent work that we accomplished and we will be ready for the next new challenge that lies ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Frakes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "S" and a long, sweeping underline.

Scott R. Frakes