



Dear NDCS Teammates,

This is the time of year when most of us embrace goals designed to set us off on the right foot. They are familiar: lose weight, exercise, spend more time reading, quit smoking, communicate more often with family members... You know the list.

We were barely into 2020 when we were ALL beset with resolutions unfamiliar to most of us (socially distance, wear a mask, universal health precautions, etc.) that have carried into 2021. This week will mark one year since the first coronavirus case was reported in the United States. It is a testament to our strength as a nation and as individuals that we have continued to persevere in the face of this pandemic.

The situation is far from over. The CDC predicts that an uptick in the death rate will continue and that by mid-February, we will reach half a million deaths attributed to COVID-19. We are anxiously waiting to see how the newly created vaccines will impact this disease. At the same time, new varieties of COVID-19 are being detected that transmit more easily from person to person. Fortunately, people are not getting sicker, but more people are being detected with the virus. Vaccinations will be an important part of controlling COVID-19, but it will likely be many months before widespread immunity can be achieved.

While resolutions to wear a mask, wash our hands, disinfect and socially distance were not ours to choose, they are part of a routine we must continue to follow. As one medical professional pointed out, adopting just one behavior is not enough. It is the additive impact of all measures that has the greatest effect. All of our actions can help protect the people around us.

While some can identify the circumstances that led to contracting COVID-19, many others cannot. This points to the stealth nature of this virus. It is possible to get it and transmit it, without even being aware.

In 2020, we were challenged with round-the-clock management of COVID-19. Already, we are seeing positive signs – fewer staff members are becoming sick and the same seems to be true in the inmate population. Still, this is not the time to drop our guard. Stay vigilant to the symptoms of COVID-19. Continue to do those things that have helped to reduce transmission of virus. Keep those resolutions at the top of your list. My hope is that they will become less necessary as 2021 goes on. For now, they are the best defense to an illness that continues to morph and knock people off their feet.

Here is hoping we all have a healthier 2021!

Scott R. Frakes