



The FRAKES Files

21-05

Director Scott R. Frakes
March 29, 2021

Dear NDCS Teammates,

Just when we think we have conquered COVID-19, a new wave rears its ugly head. News accounts over the weekend indicate states are experiencing a fourth round of growing cases. In addition, in Omaha, the UK variant was detected among children in a daycare (a variant that is more easily transmittable). NDCS is in the midst of vaccination clinics and our hope is to get our entire system in a place where we can once again allow volunteers, furloughs and many of the other activities that we had to give up last year. But, much of that strategy depends on our staff and inmate populations.

Admittedly, there is some trepidation about the vaccine. Some individuals have experienced side effects resulting from their first or second dose. As someone who has had the vaccine and has spoken to others about their experience, I can tell you that effects are short-lived and gone within a day or so. We have tried to make access to the vaccine as convenient as possible for teammates. If you are thinking about getting vaccinated, please do not delay.

Herd immunity – we've all heard that phrase kicked around since the start of the pandemic. Essentially, it is the level of protection we can all expect to have from COVID-19, either through vaccination or by having the disease. It does not mean that our chance of catching the coronavirus is zero. The virus exists and it is something we will continue to live with, much like the flu. The idea is to reach a level of protection in the population that the chance of contracting it is greatly reduced. At the very least, we want to protect people from being hospitalized or dying from this illness.

The next 120 days will be critical in curtailing the pandemic within NDCS and developing that level of herd immunity that will allow us to safely resume both staff and inmate activities. There are some simple things you can do to help:

- Take advantage of the NDCS vaccination program. Let your warden or supervisor know if you want to receive the vaccine. Once we get enough people pulled together in one location, we can organize a clinic.
- Continue to follow COVID safe practices, as defined by the CDC. Wear a mask, maintain social distance, use sanitizer, and take care of yourself. We know that people are still falling ill. We need to continue those practices that have been utilized to prevent transmission of the disease, not just at work, but also in the community.
- If you think you have symptoms, be sure to get tested. We know that people are still capable of catching and transmitting COVID-19. Fortunately, many remain asymptomatic, but we don't know how many. The only way to determine who has an active form of the virus is through testing ([TestNebraska.com](https://www.testnebraska.com)).
- Continue to remind the inmate population that they need to follow the same safe practices that you are following. They are an important part of the solution.

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By continuing to work together, we have the best chance of returning to the freedom of movement we enjoyed pre-pandemic. Volunteer programs, clubs, authorized gatherings, graduation celebrations, family visiting – we can bring all those things back if work together to reduce the risk of COVID-19.

Thank you,

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