



Announcements and Updates from the Office

INSIDE

From the Ombudsman

Summer message from Laurie Andersen, the director/ombudsman

Key Accomplishments

A synopsis of the key accomplishments of the Office

About the Office / Contacting Us

Learn about the Office and ways to connect.



FROM THE OMBUDSMAN

By Lauren "Laurie" Andersen, MM, RN, CEN, CCRN

The long, sunny days of summer are here! The time of year that many wait for when the weather is warm, the days are longer, and time with family and friends can be celebrated outside!

The signs of some relief from the COVID-19 pandemic are finally here too. Although COVID-19 continues to influence many parts of our lives and the lives of those that we love, finally we can celebrate some relief from masks over our faces, isolation from others, restrictions on our activities, and the fear/reality of illness all around us. However, we must be conscious that the COVID-19 virus hasn't given up completely yet. We still have people who are testing positive and are symptomatic from the COVID-19 virus.

I have admired how each of you has faced all of the challenges of COVID-19 and its effects within the walls of Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) facilities. I appreciate how challenging this pandemic has been on your lives, spirits, and families. I need to ask you to continue to be flexible and open-minded this summer as we watch the rise and fall of COVID-19 infections across Massachusetts and around the DOC. Your cooperation and focus on symptoms, testing, vaccines, boosters, and good infection disease prevention techniques make a difference and will aid in moving through the next wave of post-pandemic time.

The Office is pleased with the implementation of new cleaning processes for the benefit of all living and working within DOC facilities. I know you have been working with *Lighthouse*

FROM THE OMBUDSMAN - CONTINUED

Environmental Infection Prevention to change the cleaning processes and chemicals you need for cleaning and keeping the facilities in tip-top shape. I am sure that this is one more challenge to your work, but I appreciate your accepting the challenge.

The coming months will have some continuing struggle with adaptations needed with changing COVID-19 news but I assure you I will try to keep you up to date and support you as we flexibly deal with the changes. My goal is to keep you and your families as healthy as possible.

Thank you for all you do!

Laurie Andersen

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Office would like to share with you a few items that have been reviewed, including:

- ✓ **Masking is voluntary:** For most of the time, in most places, masking is now voluntary. In all healthcare areas, masking will continue to be mandatory. At times, when there are clusters of COVID-19 outbreaks, masking will need to be mandatory during isolation and quarantine periods.
- ✓ **DOC Corrections facilities have isolated outbreaks:** Recently MCI Framingham, MCI Cedar Junction, SBCC, MTC, and OCCC have had COVID-19 infections. This is really not surprising as COVID-19 infections are still in all Massachusetts communities. Everyone has done an excellent job responding to the process of isolation and quarantine to keep the outbreaks to a limited number.
- ✓ **Communication:** The Office is working on this every day! We now have the website, email, and phone number. We would love to hear from DOC staff regarding concerns and questions about COVID-19 and the post-pandemic world.
- ✓ **Feedback:** We would love to hear from the DOC staff and leaders as we move toward a post-pandemic normal.
- ✓ **Visitation:** Masking in the visiting area will continue for now and be re-evaluated on August 1st. The reason is to limit infection risk from the visitors. Testing continues but we are adding the additional layer of protection for now as we have just recently allowed masks to be discontinued for staff and inmates.

ABOUT THE OFFICE



Office of the Ombudsman

Independent COVID-19 Oversight to
MA Department of Correction

The independently operated Office of the Ombudsman, run by Lauren M. Andersen, MM, RN, CEN, CCRN, Director/Ombudsman, monitors and reports on the Massachusetts Department of Correction's efforts to limit the spread of SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) in the DOC's facilities across Massachusetts.

CONTACTING US



Website: <https://covidombudsman-madoc.org>

To reach the Office regarding a COVID-19-related inquiry or concern, please submit via our website by clicking [here](#). Inquiries can be submitted anonymously if desired. If you provide your contact information when filling out the form, the Office will use best efforts to respond within 2 business days.

We look forward to addressing your COVID-19-related questions, concerns, and inquiries.

1-800 Number: 1-833-662-8410

You may also submit your COVID-19 inquiry or concern via our telephone number. COVID-19 related inquiries may be left anonymously. If you would like a response from the Office, then please leave your contact information as instructed on the voicemail.

