
**JHA COVID-19 Prison
Survey Comment
Report**



Perceptions and Experiences from People inside Prison during the Pandemic

Section: Social Distancing

Overview

JHA's COVID-19 Prison Survey Comment Report presents information from comments shared in response to [JHA's COVID-19 survey](#), contextualized with survey data and other information. This survey was responded to by 16,351 people incarcerated in IDOC in late April and early May 2020.

This section of the report summarizes people's comments regarding difficulties of social distancing in prisons and includes subsections on cohorting, incarcerated workers, and high-risk prisoners. This is one of 12 sections reflecting the comments JHA received from people in prisons; the report's Executive Summary and all other sections can be found on our website www.thejha.org.



Social Distancing

People reported anxiety about their inability to control who was around them and fears about asymptomatic carriers.

Q9 In a 6'x9' cell unable to
+ maintain "social distancing" (not possible)

It's impossible for us to stay 6 feet away from other people... the gallery we housed on ain't even 6 ft wide, or the cell we sleep in. – Stateville

There's 2 people to a cell. Some cells have 4 people, so how can you practice social distancing in a cell? – Western

I follow good health practices by staying in my cell, but with two guys in a small cell (8 feet by 6 feet) it's hard to be six feet apart. – Danville

Well it's impossible for us to stay 6 feet when you have 10 to 12 men in the cell with you, ain't no space at all. – Dixon

The administration contends that we must use social distancing, yet we are packed 35 plus inmates in the shower twice a week, and we are packed 20 plus inmates in the cellhouse bullpen with no PPE. – Menard

I live with 3 other inmates whom I can high five from my bunk. – Decatur

It is impossible to social distance, 100 people on a wing, 20 beds per room, 1 bathroom, 1 shower. – Taylorville

I can reach out and touch my bunk neighbor to my left and below without getting out of bed. – Southwestern

I am in a dorm with 19 other people, and we are not 6 feet away from each other. How can we practice social distancing if we're in arms reach of the next person? – Lincoln

23 hours of 6 days a week, we are always within 6 feet of 99 other inmates throughout most of the day. As I write this on my bunk, I have 3 other inmates only 3ft from me and another 4 less than 6 ft on the other side. We are always on top of each other in here. – Robinson

In [JHA's April 8 recommendations](#) we reiterated that IDOC should explain to staff and people incarcerated how social distancing can be expected to work in their particular prison environment, as well as explaining this to their outside supports.

JHA's COVID-19 surveys asked if prisoners stayed 6 feet away from others *when possible*. Many people commented that this was *not possible* for them, implying that the question may have been difficult to answer. However, **61.6% (9,435) reported they did stay 6 feet from others when possible, while only 26.5% (4,094) reported that other prisoners stayed 6 feet away from others when possible.**

Many people commented on the difficulty of socially distancing in housing, cells, and dorms. People reported feeling like “sardines” at many facilities.

I would give Centralia Corr. Center an “A” for effort, but a “D” or “F” for implementation of this policy. They say stay 6 feet away when we're outside (in the open air), but almost like sardines when in the chow hall and housing wings... And work. So a rational person would ask where's the risk greater, in clustered numbers, or in the open air. They do try, in their own way, to follow recommended guidelines... until the politics and bureaucracy come face to face with reality. – Centralia

People were very aware of the vulnerability of dorm housing, where social distancing is not possible, to COVID-19 uncontrollable outbreaks.

If the virus gets into Murphysboro we will all be infected in days. – Murphysboro

Some wondered why with empty housing unit space they were not being spread out more for their protection and ability to maintain physical distance.

Emptying a housing unit to house infected has only increased the population density of the wings and increased the probability of rapid infection. – Taylorville

There are 42 men stacked on top of each other in dorm 6 here at Murphysboro. No possible chance of social distancing. We are doing what everyone in the world is told not to do. While Dorm 7 is completely empty and not being used. – Murphysboro

Three empty dorms and we are all cramped into dorms E, F, G, H, I, J, K, and L. They have over 300 empty beds and we sleep less than 2ft from each other. We are going to die!!!!!!

– Vandalia

People wrote about being double-celled wanting to be singled-celled, some even commenting they had been given a new cellmate post-pandemic, when they were medically vulnerable, or where there was space for more people to be single-celled.

The problem with isolation in IDOC is being trapped in a cell with another prisoner 24 hours a day, and the other prisoner is not practicing good hygiene. Need to be truly isolated! – Western

There were many reports that facility efforts at social distancing felt arbitrary and that social distancing was not occurring during certain movement or not in their living areas. Several people commented when coming and going from places people must bunch up.

When we walk to the chow hall were all grouped up together for 20 mins. Then told to walk 6 feet apart... what sense does that make? – Centralia

They enforce social distancing in chow hall where we sit at a single table and then we go back to dorms of 100 people after eating, most of the time, cold meals. – Jacksonville

While going to chow we are told to keep our distance from each other but while in housing we are expected to sleep within 2' of each other. - Taylorville

People expressed concern about large group movement to dietary and about spacing the area. While some prisons were seating people with spacing in dining areas it seemed that this was not universal or did not always permit six feet of distance, e.g. while women at Decatur reported they sat two seats apart but that others were seated directly across from them within three feet.

The seats in the dining room are too close together. We don't have enough arm space to eat without touching the person next to us. – Pontiac

How could they say stay 6ft away, but we all live in one room. They want you to pair up when you walk in a line, get in the lunchroom and they tell us to stay away from each other. – Vandalia

Forced to walk in line to chow hall and stand a foot apart then sit a foot apart at the tables, defeating the entire purpose of the lockdown. – Dixon

Concerns over Physical Distancing

People expressed a lot of concern in comments regarding lack of ability for proper physical distancing. They also felt staff made it impossible for them to physically distance from one another, e.g. by bunching together line movement, double-celling, or putting multiple people in bullpens or showers.

We are led to chow hall single file and sit one to a table, as opposed to four. This is the only time social distancing is enforced. Once on deck, we sleep and live a few feet from our neighbors. No effort is made to separate us. – Robinson

The problem in this dorm setting is, the Warden wants us to stay 6 feet away from each other when we go to chow to eat. But on the other hand (when not in the public eye), in the dorm inmates are forced to be in 5 rooms, 20 inmates per room no room to workout, do homework or law work and no room to cook your food. – Lincoln

The \$30 [commissary] limit is not sufficient to have food until we shop again which forces us to walk to chow, to eat there with our masks off and have more exposure to catch COVID-19. – Jacksonville

However, having trays delivered to wings did not solve all such concerns as people reported social distancing was still not perfected.

Additionally, on first shift, trays are brought to the cellhouse and the officers call over the intercom one wing at a time...inevitably, all the inmates end up bunching together waiting to get their trays. – Graham

There were also concerns regarding lack of proper social distancing on yards.

The governor said stay-at-home, no more than 10 people at a time. So, they line up about 50-90 people on the East wing, run out 10 at a time, six feet apart. But, only in the yard. It's about 100-200 people using all the same things. Everyone is in massive groups playing cards, working out, doing anything and everything. – Menard

By September, staff reported that yards at Menard had been limited to 25 people, but that enforcing distancing was still difficult.

People pointed out that it was not possible for them to socially distance using phones.

We use the phones standing side by side less than two feet apart from each other. – Illinois River

The phones in the cellhouse were installed approximately two feet apart, so every time I use the phone I have to have three other inmates within that 6 foot zone. – Graham

Others expressed concerns about lack of social distancing and healthcare.

There are 2 staff walking with nurses to pass out meds. There is no 6 ft of distance. This triples the possibility of the spread. – Pontiac

At Pontiac, a staff member also commented in their survey response, "It's impossible to keep social distance during med pass due to the structure of the facility."

People wrote about being in small holding areas together, or sometimes being even cuffed and chained to other people.

We [people with diabetes] were forced to have to sit in a cage/bullpen with at least 15 to 20 other diabetics and wait in the order we came to take our insulin. I spoke to the

med tech about my safety and health, and I was told to wash my hands when I returned to my cell. – Menard

When I come out for insulin twice a day, I and the other diabetics are put in the little area under the stairs ... together, we were not given masks and it's impossible to social distance, when there is 5 of us with 3 COs (8 total) in a 4ft x 10ft space. – Pontiac

Healthcare had scheduled about 55 “must honor” passes for the W-house. Those 55 people were crowded into holding cages that left less than 6 inches between them. The CO told me to go into the cage even after he was informed by me that it violated the 6ft separation C-19 rule. – Menard

Pontiac also violates social-distancing guidelines routinely as well. For example, last week I was handcuffed to two other inmates on the bench for an hour just to see the mental health case worker, when I complained, I was told “social-distancing” only applies to groups of ten or more people. In fact, social distancing states that everyone should keep at least six feet away from other people, yet I was forced to be handcuffed to two other inmates on a small bench for an hour just to see a mental health case worker. I’m not even in segregation, so this was doubly unnecessary. If Pontiac wants to handcuff me during this quarantine, they should do it with a six-foot gap between me and other inmates, not handcuff me to other inmates, which makes keeping a six feet distance impossible. – Pontiac

Others commented that mental health or other small groups still occurring are not able to socially distance. JHA has observed the space constraints in some group rooms and numbers would have to be considerably limited and some of the spaces may not be appropriate without use of barriers and review of ventilation.

We have a drug group with 25 people in a close area 2 to 3 feet apart. – Robinson

Some people reported they are also held in bullpens before showers with others and cannot maintain social distance or are made to shower two, or even more than ten at a time, or the showers themselves are very close together. For example, at Stateville someone wrote that there were 15 men showering with six-eight working showerheads.

We are being forced to take showers with other inmates. Instead of just putting 1 inmate in the shower at a time, we are forced 2 at a time. Problem is showers are very close, you are 1 to 2 feet apart. – Western

The showers make social distancing impossible. They’re only 1 foot apart. We had an officer who stuffed 24 people in a shower room only intended for 16 people, minus the 2 showers that are broken. – Menard

Showers are COVID factories even if you walk into a disinfected shower. The other inmates in the shower could be positive (COVID) and a. no social distancing showers (which are packed) and b. water spraying and bouncing off of people’s bodies, walls, and floors aerosols the virus. – Stateville

People reported many concerns regarding staff not physically distancing from prisoners or from other staff.

I have seen a group of 12 officers in close quarters with only 3 or 4 wearing masks. – Centralia

The correctional officers were within mere inches of each other laughing about the situation of the inmate lockdown, saying it's easy money now that we had no movement. – East Moline

5 to 10 of them [staff] stand in circles all over the place without masks. Then they give us tickets for asking them to wear masks or wear them properly. – Jacksonville

I also don't understand how the officers gather in the control bubble and not wear their masks the other night there was six correction officers all gathered talking to each other and not one had a mask on and there is no way to social distance in the control bubble. – Graham

People had concerns about searches, shakedowns, or compliance checks and some felt they were being used to harass people and were unnecessary given lengthy lockdowns.

No one has been out and about since March, so why the need for shakedowns? We are afraid to allow staff around us because they are out there with this virus – only they can make me sick! – Pontiac

On April 9th we were subject to a mass shake down and forced to sit at tables together directly violating the 6 feet distancing rule. – Illinois River

The 2nd and 3rd shift (3-11pm and 11-7am) shifts are constantly pulling inmates over and patting them down in shake downs. If one of those COs are asymptomatic, they can easily come into work and pass off the virus to the inmate population, all because they want to be touching inmates in a stop and frisk. It's totally uncalled for when they have metal detector wands they could use instead of touching inmates. – Menard



COHORTING

People in here are sick and the prison is keeping us all together. We aren't supposed to be around other dorms but they are mixing. – Vandalia

In [JHA's April 8 recommendations](#) we reiterated that **IDOC should keep staff with the same incarcerated cohort as much as possible to diminish cross-exposure and explain to staff and people incarcerated how cohorting of prisoners could be expected to work in their particular prison environment**, as well as explaining this to their outside supports.

As noted above, people reported that enforcement of social distancing felt arbitrary at times when they felt they were cohorted, or that social distancing was even being used as an excuse to deny them “privileges.”

They took our dayroom from us because we were playing cards. If we can't stay 6ft apart in our cells, why do we have to in the dayroom? – Western

Yard was scheduled to open in April, but we are not allowed to go - even though we get herded to chow in groups of 50 without social distancing. At least at yard, I could practice social distancing. – Decatur

We're allowed 10 people out in the dayroom or yard at a single time, but have to go to the chow hall with min. 12 line workers, 6 staff, and 20 inmates on each side at a time at breakfast. – Graham

Cohorting

Cohorting requires the same people being kept together as much as possible without introducing any new people without extensive controls in place, e.g. appropriate quarantining and testing.

People expressed concerns regarding interacting with an unnecessary number of different staff and there being more staff than necessary interacting with them.

Many officers are switching duties, moving from one cellhouse to another, where one cellhouse was known to have infected inmates. – Pontiac

Why does staff alternate so much. They sign the 'books' every 30 min and every day it's a new CO, and sometimes multiple, well every shift. They are conducting shakedowns and contaminating our cells. – Graham

Some people reported that their cohorted group mixed with others for certain activities, such as dietary, yard, healthcare, etc.

In AM breakfast time, staff runs both sides of wing together but has taken yard away because inmates are not allowed to mix with other houses/wings. At PM chow times staff will run late chow inmates with other houses so there is still inmate/houses intermingling. - Taylorville

There were concerns that staff were not properly preventing mixing from different cohorted housing areas. For example, at Southwestern some people commented that many people dorm hop to play cards and hangout with others in different dorms, not adhering to social distancing.

Rules are not being enforced pertaining to inmates hopping from room to room. Fights and bullying are prevalent. – Taylorville

People also expressed concerns about what they perceived to be unnecessary movement of prisoners by administrators. Some people reported that new people were introduced to their housing area or that dorms were mixed. This is inconsistent with good cohorting practices.

They keep moving people around the prison which could possibly put others at risk of getting sick. – East Moline

At several facilities, people expressed confusion about parts of the facility being closed to create quarantine areas thus moving more people onto other units. Because of these moves, it seemed

many people did not experience benefits of population reductions because their living areas became more crowded. At Pinckneyville, people commented that additional people were moved into American with Disabilities Act (ADA) cells.

They moved us from unit to unit without having a purpose it seems or having a good safety plan in motion. They moved inmates from different units that were once separated from each other and confined us all together. They couldn't even make up their mind about which unit they would use as a quarantine unit. – Decatur

Throughout IDOC people expressed concerns about some housing moves still occurring.

Pontiac has violated numerous COVID-19 preventive measures supposedly instituted by Springfield. For example, the IDOC claims it has ceased all prisoner transfers, yet here in Pontiac they routinely transfer inmates getting out of segregation to other housing units, including the unit I'm housed in. – Pontiac

There are 4 cellhouses, plus OR (orientation). Inmates have tested positive in cellhouses 1 and 2. Yet, they are still moving inmates from 1 and 2 house into 4 house. This is counterproductive in stopping the spread of the virus. Now, there's inmates in 4 house showing signs and symptoms of COVID-19. – Hill

One thing I don't understand is why our prison is still doing house to house transfers. Doesn't that make the risk greater of spreading the virus? – Shawnee

Inmates from other housing units who have went to seg. for only 48-72 hours are being placed in other housing units upon their release. Increasing potential risk of cross contamination. – Taylorville

[IDOC public reporting](#) also shows that some interfacility transfers occurred during the pandemic, as some people in survey comments reported. For example, staff and prisoners wrote that COVID-19 positive women were moved from work release housing at Fox Valley Adult Transition Center to Logan and that some women had moved from Logan to Decatur during Logan's power outage. Logan administrators responded to concerns raised regarding the Fox Valley transfers that the women who had tested positive were housed in the healthcare unit (HCU) isolation rooms for the duration of their quarantine and that "all necessary precautions" were taken for the relocation and placement of other women who had been housed as inpatients in the HCU area.

P.A.T.C. [Peoria Adult Transition Center] transferred me and another inmate when they were not supposed to and when it was unsafe because of this virus epidemic. – Hill

Hill administrators replied that prisoners who had their ATC status revoked arrived from Peoria ATC on March 26th prior to Governor Pritzker's Executive Order 2020-13 which suspended all transfers and intakes going into effect at 5 pm, and stated upon arrival both men were placed in quarantine status for 14 days per the COVID-19 Intake Protocol.

On the other hand, several people also reported that they needed a housing move, for example, due to earning their way out of segregation, completing their disciplinary time, having cellmate issues, seeking protective custody, being in reception status, or supposedly somewhere temporarily on a writ. Some people reported because of lack of typical movement, they were housed with others they should not be around, e.g. having protective custody populations in the same area as others not in that status. Someone at Pontiac also believed that IDOC was not

making decisions on whether or not to approve people's protective custody status during the pandemic leaving them in limbo and housed in less desirable areas with fewer privileges.

Moves may be necessary for safety. In [JHA's April 8 recommendations](#) we reiterated that **IDOC should heighten vigilance for inter-cellmate issues and suicidality**. At several facilities we heard from people who reported issues with cellmates to staff who would not let people move without being ticketed for "refusing housing." Additionally, people continued to have physical issues, for example, requiring them to be moved to housing where they would not need to climb stairs. Western administrators responded to concerns regarding re-celling requests and administrative moves but stating that moves were not done unless approved by the Wardens and HCU, that they were moving people for cellmate issues, and that around the time of the survey they had just finished making moves to have an area to isolate or quarantine if needed and had moved high-risk people away from that area. Again, this is an area where people needed to be better informed as people understood that new people introduced new dangers and did not know what, if anything, was being done to ensure their safety in a situation where they had no control.



INCARCERATED WORKERS

When I worked as janitor, we didn't get the protective gear we needed to clean up blood, urine and feces in suicide cells on our wing. I was always worried I would get HIV or Hepatitis C.

– Dixon

15 of us, clumped together, walk to work together. We were working 14-hour days – they give us one paper thin cotton mouth mask, and they tell us that has to last a week. Ironically during COVID-19 pandemic, they give us less cleaning supplies than normal operation. – Pontiac

Due to the fact that IDOC pays less than \$15 a month to our inmate facility janitors, many of them refuse to clean areas because of the lack of protective gear that is provided. We do not want to risk our safety to clean an area up without the proper gear.

– Lincoln

In [JHA's April 8 recommendations](#) we reiterated that **IDOC should carefully screen incarcerated workers for symptoms, provide them with appropriate PPE, maintain social distancing as much as possible, and in the absence of ability to socially distance, cohort or keep the same individuals together as a group, and train the workers in COVID-19 best practices**. Anticipating increased demand for labor and possible quarantines we also recommended that IDOC should hire and cross train more workers. Survey comments included many concerns regarding incarcerated workers.

Known case(s) of corona have been found on the MSU (farm), yet as of Friday 5/1 in the evening the MSU workers are coming behind the wall to work all or most of the jobs. I can't grasp the logic with this. – Pontiac

Some incarcerated worker assignments were canceled due to the pandemic and facility restrictions. JHA notes that some other correctional systems, such as the Washington Department

of Corrections, reported they continued paying all workers whose assignments had been restricted due to COVID-19, recognizing that people depend on these funds.

There were several comments regarding incarcerated workers not being cohorted, e.g. being housed on different units, or moving from unit to unit, often without proper PPE. This included concerns regarding incarcerated workers bringing trays onto quarantined units. There were concerns at Logan and other facilities about dietary workers being housed in different areas increasing the chances of cross contamination. Logan administrators responded that assignments were scheduled according to housing units so that people from the same housing unit were scheduled to work the same shift to avoid cross contamination. At Sheridan people expressed concerns that workers were not quarantined for 14 days after coming into contact with COVID-19 positive people. Some people at Stateville also reported incarcerated workers kept working while waiting for COVID-19 test results and that workers were moving between housing units where people were infected.

Many incarcerated workers in various positions wrote about not being supplied with PPE or sufficient PPE. Logan administrators responded to concerns raised in survey responses that they had provided workers with PPE, although they did not specify when.

Additionally, there were concerns about tight quarters and lack compliance with social distancing and appropriate PPE usage in workplaces.

Screening and Protection for Incarcerated Workers

JHA believes that where incarcerated workers were interacting with other prisoners of necessity they needed to be screened and protected like staff, including temperature monitoring and provision of PPE, from the outset.

I work in the kitchen. Sometimes we get a mask, sometimes we don't. – Menard

Supervisors in Inmate kitchen do not always use masks at work. They have them but a few take them off their face while at work. Need to do better. Inmates do not use plastic gloves when handling trays for pre-prep, only during tray line feeding – regularly touch spoons with bare hands. – Pontiac

Incarcerated workers at several facilities reported working excessive shifts without proper protections or compensation. While we understand the desire to limit the number of workers and different people interacting with staff, reasonable work hours should be maintained. Additionally, some people wanted to be able to be compensated for work related injuries.

They stopped inmate movement but made us work non-stop for over 45 days, no day off. Doing so nullifies 6ft separation and close contact. It's kind of counter-productive. – Menard

Since the coronavirus lockdown we work alternate days, 4 days a week for 15 hours straight for the same \$45 state pay, it's painful and slavery. We prepare, put on trays, dump all the trays, wash dishes, pull garbage, storeroom, inventory, cook for staff, operate forklifts, etc. One crew prepares all 3 meals for 3,600 inmates. Please advocate

for us for a pay raise to \$65-\$75-\$85 a month or any raise feasible, whatever it is, it's not what we're worth, it's not even minimum wage, they make in two hours what we get every month – commissary prices always increase, but our pay does not. – Pontiac

I work for dietary for 12 hours a day. When this first began, I worked from 7pm-7am for about a month 7 days a week. After a time (a lot of complaining) the bosses gave us a day off. 1 day off... I work long hours and am continued being paid only \$30 monthly. – Illinois River

I work in the officers' kitchen [13 hours] every day. I barely get any sleep, not only because of the hours but we weren't separated like we were last time ... where everyone is a worker and has to wake up. I'm constantly surrounded by noise (yelling, banging and stupidity). It's already stressful as it is but being surround by all this is too much to bear. I can't stop working because I'll be fired or they'll lower my \$45 a month to either \$28 or \$18 or whatever they feel like and I need the money. It would be nice to make more money or at least be compensated with a tray or something? It's stressing me out. I don't get to use the phone every day either because of work. Don't get to go to yard. – Pontiac

In addition to concerns regarding possible COVID-19 exposure and lack of protections for and from workers, JHA also heard that many workers were having difficulties obtaining “privileges,” such as use of phones, showers, or yards, due to their work shifts or circumstances not being considered. People reported they were just told to “lock up” after their work shifts.

The yard schedule has constantly changed and because I'm a worker my yard time conflicts with my work schedule so I don't get the opportunity to go to the yard. This also holds true for our dayroom schedule. – Graham

People reported they were punished for not working.

If someone refused to go to work, whether it was a physical reason or they were scared of the coronavirus, they were issued tickets. The disciplinary ticket even said it was for a dangerous disturbance. – Pontiac

They are forcing us to work dietary, threatening us with tickets and seg. if we don't. – Southwestern

Also as a result of the changes that came with the pandemic I chose to no longer work in the dietary. I felt that it wasn't safe to do so. Not only did I convey this message to the supervisors who I see frequently I also spoke with the head supervisor and he told me that not only did I have to work until this pandemic came to a cessation but I would be issued a ticket if I quit. I didn't know slave labor was part of the policies being exacted in IDOC. I quit and received a ticket. – Graham

Dietary was a particular area of concern. People reported that dietary workers were not provided with PPE or screened as JHA recommended and that socially distancing was difficult for dietary workers. Someone at East Moline reported that he was a dietary worker and went to work with symptoms. Without establishing a way for people to be able to take time off of work or properly screening workers this is a serious concern. IDOC administrators acknowledged that keeping dietary workers is a challenge and may be contributing to dissatisfaction with food.

The inmates that work in chow hall do not cover their nose and mouths while serving our food.

– Robinson

They let people (inmates) who were displaying symptoms still go to work in the kitchen and we were basically forced to eat the food because ... our cell house was only allowed to shop once. In my opinion, that is dangerous and it puts everyone at risk because the fastest way for a disease to spread in here is through the kitchen because the kitchen feeds everyone. – Pontiac

I work in the kitchen and people on the line making trays sneezing and wiping their face standing elbow to elbow. Also the staff come in to pick up the trays after we make them while they sit there and get cold for 20-30 minutes. Not covering their faces and do not wear proper PPE. – Graham

There were a few exceptional positive comments from workers.

I feel that everyone (inmates and staff) handled this as well as it could be handled... I work in the kitchen, and the supervisors have done a great job keeping us supplied with masks, clean rags, and cleaning supplies. There has been a pretty strict cleaning schedule and everyone seems to follow it as close as they can while carrying out their other duties. – Menard

Review Expectations for Conditions for Workers

JHA recommends IDOC review expectations for conditions for workers including access to PPE, lengths of shifts, and access to phones and showers. We also recommend that extra “hazard” pay for work during the pandemic be considered, as well as awards of good time.

People who work in Illinois Correctional Industry (ICI), typically considered the best prison jobs, also reported working long shifts under conditions when they were more exposed to others and requested their efforts be acknowledged.

I'm helping save lives and would just like to be awarded 6 months good time for my contributions so that I could be closer to going home to my family! I don't wanna die in here from COVID-19 either! Could you guys put in a good word for us inmates that work in the industry unit shop down here in Centralia because we're working really hard doin 12-hour days producing COVID-19 gowns and masks basically for free! I don't mind helping to save lives potentially, but I really feel we have earned something more, i.e. that 6 months good time that IDOC doesn't give anybody unless you meet slim criteria that's so ambiguous that it's impossible to obtain other than maybe circumstances such as this? – Centralia

JHA fully supports IDOC utilizing sentencing credits to the greatest extent possible to motivate positive behavior and reduce population, which is the most effective tool available to increase positive public health outcomes.



HIGH-RISK PRISONERS

People often commented in surveys that they were medically vulnerable and felt that they had not been offered proactive protections in IDOC. Best practices in relation to COVID-19 required taking steps to identify and protect such people.

underlying health conditions that put me at a high risk. I've heard what's going on at a stateville C.C. and I'm scared to death.

Wexford Health Sources, Inc., has done nothing to help protect high risk individuals like myself – they (IDOC) have not passed out masks, gloves, extra cleaning supplies or asked that high risk people be moved – Pontiac has a lot of empty space to accommodate high risk people – numerous requests have been made for these things.
– Pontiac

Often people in this situation expressed considerable anxiety. Likewise, JHA has heard from many people's outside supports who are particularly anxious regarding COVID-19 due to their incarcerated loved one's susceptibility.

I have HIV, which weakens my immune system. Staff does not take the seriousness of this deadly virus. I am scared for my health and safety. – Danville

I have not ever gone to the dining room for a single meal, as I am at high risk... They have never asked or offered a different means for high risk to get their meals, so I just go without. – Lincoln

At some facilities vulnerable prisoners were moved. For example, at Centralia some reported that high-risk people were moved into the receiving unit and were single-celled; however, someone in this housing reported he did not understand why they still needed to walk to dietary.

Many people in comments discussed their medical vulnerability and desire for PPE. At Robinson, someone commented that he requested a mask due to being high-risk and never received a response.

Those of us with health issues haven't been issued face masks. Only staff and the dialysis patients. – Graham

I believe they have not done enough for susceptible inmates, ones that have suppressed immune systems. These inmates should have been given medical masks from day one, without having to ask. – Pontiac

At a few facilities, people believed that areas being used for medical quarantine or isolation were in the same vicinity as older or vulnerable people.

As discussed above, people had concerns about lack of ability to physically distance in cells and dorms and some people with medical vulnerabilities requested single celling, which should be considered.

[Administrators] are refusing to act on my request for seclusion or even respond to the life and death issue. I am currently 1. [80+] years old, 2. on [10+] prescription meds, 3. Have been suffering with upper respiratory problems, 4. I have been locked up for [decades], 5, have only [a few] years to go, 6. They have given me [medical treatment] to no avail, 7. I am confined to a wheelchair. – Dixon

People commonly also commented regarding wanting early release consideration for high-risk individuals.

I am 65 years old [with multiple preexisting medical issues] here for a forgery and retail theft of a cigarette lighter and writing a \$50 check. – Centralia



This report was written by JHA staff.
Media inquiries should be directed to JHA's Executive Director Jennifer Vollen-Katz
at (312) 291-9555 x205 or jvollen@thejha.org.
Learn more about JHA at our website www.thejha.org.

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