

COVID-19 Survey Results: Pontiac Correctional Center

The John Howard Association (JHA) is an independent citizen correctional oversight organization that goes into prisons to monitor conditions of confinement and treatment of people who are incarcerated; we fight for a fair and humane system and for government transparency and accountability. For 119 years we have been the eyes and ears of the public inside Illinois' prisons, reporting what we see, hear and learn inside facilities and using this information to recommend policy and practice changes and advocate for system reform.

It is critical that we know and understand how people in prison are experiencing the COVID-19 health crisis and what the government must do to meet the health needs of people in prison. To further this end, JHA launched a special system-wide COVID-19 survey to enable us to hear directly from those who are in prisons about prison conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The survey results reported herein indicate how 522 people imprisoned at Pontiac Correctional Center responded to survey items contained within the COVID-19 survey during the time frame of April 24th to May 20th 2020. As of April 24th, 2020, there were 1,155 people imprisoned at Pontiac. Thus, this sample of survey respondents consists of 45.19% of Pontiac's prison population. COVID-19 surveys that were completed after May 20th will be accounted for in JHA's work and analyses conducted in the future, but are not reported below.

JHA provided prison administrators with enough survey packets (COVID-19 survey, informed consent notice/instruction sheet, and business reply envelope addressed to JHA) so that every person imprisoned at Pontiac had an opportunity to participate in the COVID-19 survey if they chose to do so. Because some people who submitted a survey did not answer all questions within the survey, the count of people who responded to each question is less than the overall sample of 522.

The results of the surveys JHA collected from people imprisoned at Pontiac Correctional Center are tabulated on the pages that follow.

Tables of Results by Individual Survey Items:

Q1: How did you get information from IDOC about COVID 19 prevention?		
Paper bulletin on unit	161	30.84%
Inmate info channel on TV	139	26.63%
Verbal communication by staff	93	17.82%
Other	163	31.23%
I did not get this information	77	14.75%
Total does not add to 100% for this question because more than one answer could be selected		

Q2: Did you have enough soap to regularly wash your hands in the last week?		
No	184	36.36%
Yes	298	58.89%
Unsure	24	4.74%
Total	506	100%
No response: 16 (3.07%)		

Q3: How often did you get cleaning chemicals from IDOC to clean your cell/sleeping area in the last week (examples: soap, bleach, Citral Green or peroxide)?		
Once a day	210	42.08%
2 to 3 times last week	117	23.45%
Once last week	132	26.45%
None	40	8.02%
Total	499	100%
No response: 23 (4.41%)		

Q4: Did you get enough cleaning chemicals to thoroughly clean your cell/sleeping area in the last week?		
No, I did not get enough to make cell clean	324	63.28%
Yes	132	25.78%
Unsure	15	2.93%
No, I did not get any cleaning chemicals	41	8.01%
Total	512	100%
No response: 10 (1.92%)		

Q5: Did the common areas you have access to get cleaned at least two times a day in the last week (examples: dayrooms, showers)?		
No	211	41.45%
Some areas cleaned, but not all	130	25.54%
Yes, all areas were cleaned	113	22.20%
Unsure	55	10.81%
Total	509	100%
No response: 13 (2.49%)		

Q6: Have you tried to get medical care because of COVID-19 in the last week?		
No, because I did not want to	24	4.74%
No, because I was not sick	365	72.13%
Yes, but no response from staff	103	20.36%
Yes, and staff responded	14	2.77%
Total	506	100%
No response: 16 (3.07%)		

Q7: Would you tell IDOC staff (medical or security) if you were sick because of COVID-19?		
No	48	9.32%
Yes	424	82.33%
Unsure	43	8.35%
Total	515	100%
No response: 7 (1.34%)		

Q8: Did you go to yard at least once in the last week?		
No, not allowed to	208	40.94%
No, did not want to	125	24.61%
Yes	175	34.45%
Total	508	100%
No response: 14 (2.68%)		

Q9a: Did the inmates around you follow good health practices in the last week by washing their hands often?		
No	99	19.53%
Yes	82	16.17%
Unsure	326	64.30%
Total	507	100%
No response: 15 (2.87%)		

Q9b: Did the inmates around you follow good health practices in the last week by covering their mouth with inside of arm when coughing/sneezing?		
No	189	37.88%
Yes	75	15.03%
Unsure	235	47.09%
Total	499	100%
No response: 23 (4.41%)		

Q9c: Did the inmates around you follow good health practices in the last week by cleaning shared items after use (example: phones)?		
No	160	32.52%
Yes	161	32.72%
Unsure	171	34.76%
Total	492	100%
No response: 30 (5.75%)		

Q9d: Did the inmates around you follow good health practices in the last week by staying at least 6 feet away from others when possible?		
No	216	44.35%
Yes	169	34.70%
Unsure	102	20.94%
Total	487	100%
No response: 35 (6.70%)		

Q10a: Did you follow good health practices in the last week by washing your hands often?		
No	10	1.98%
Yes	487	96.25%
Unsure	9	1.78%
Total	506	100%
No response: 16 (3.07%)		

Q10b: Did you follow good health practices in the last week by covering your mouth with inside of arm when coughing/sneezing?		
No	30	5.96%
Yes	462	91.85%
Unsure	11	2.19%
Total	503	100%
No response: 19 (3.64%)		

Q10c: Did you follow good health practices in the last week by cleaning shared items after use (example: phones)?		
No	60	12.10%
Yes	425	85.69%
Unsure	11	2.22%
Total	496	100%
No response: 26 (4.98%)		

Q10d: Did you follow good health practices in the last week by staying at least 6 feet away from others when possible?		
No	118	24.28%
Yes	337	69.34%
Unsure	31	6.38%
Total	486	100%
No response: 36 (6.90%)		

Q11: Could you take a shower at least 3 times last week?		
No	85	16.73%
Yes	423	83.27%
Total	508	100%
No response: 14 (2.68%)		

Q12: Did you get laundry service in the last week (whites and blues)?		
No, was not offered	34	6.81%
No, do not want to use laundry service	84	16.83%
Yes, and my laundry was cleaned	265	53.11%
Yes, but they did not use detergent	116	23.25%
Total	499	100%
No response: 23 (4.41%)		

Q13: Did you get at least one free phone call in the last week?		
No	278	56.39%
Yes	130	26.37%
Yes, but the call cut out early	20	4.06%
This does not apply to me	65	13.18%
Total	493	100%
No response: 29 (5.56%)		

Q14: Did you get a free video visit in the last week?		
No	339	67.13%
Yes, and it worked	16	3.17%
Yes, but bad service/ cut short	54	10.69%
This does not apply to me	96	19.01%
Total	505	100%
No response: 17 (3.26%)		

Q15: Could you send and get mail in the last week?		
No	66	13.33%
Yes	417	84.24%
This does not apply to me	12	2.42%
Total	495	100%
No response: 27 (5.17%)		

Q16: Did commissary run on schedule this week?		
Yes, full shop	60	11.95%
Yes, limited shop	43	8.57%
Yes, but not my unit's shop week	51	10.16%
No	348	69.32%
Total	502	100%
No response: 20 (3.83%)		