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Death of COVID-19 Positive Man Incarcerated at MCF-Oak Park Heights Reported by Minnesota Department of Corrections

Minneapolis, Minn.— On Sunday, November 22, 2020 a 73-year-old man incarcerated at the Minnesota Correctional Facility-Oak Park Heights, died at the University of Minnesota Medical Center.

The man, whose identity is being withheld pending full notification of next of kin, recently tested positive for COVID-19 while receiving medical care for terminal cancer. It is not known where he contracted COVID-19.

“We extend our deepest condolences to the loved ones and friends of this man,” said Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) Commissioner Paul Schnell. “Since the beginning of this pandemic we’ve worked to take all reasonable steps to minimize the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in the state’s correctional facilities for the well-being of those we serve and our staff,” he added. “Just like in our communities, this is a very difficult time for those incarcerated in our facilities, and for our staff who are working to keep them safe.”

This is the fourth COVID-related death of an incarcerated person in the Minnesota DOC system since the pandemic began. Two other incarcerated people are currently receiving ventilator treatment at outside hospitals.

The DOC has conducted comprehensive testing of all incarcerated people and staff in our facilities. For a comprehensive list of the significant measures MCF-Oak Park Heights has taken to reduce the likelihood of COVID-19 spreading, see: https://mn.gov/doc/about/covid-19-updates/mcf-oak-park-heights-covid-19-response/

The DOC has taken measures across the system to manage the risk of COVID-19 entering correctional facilities and spreading, including: implementing “Stay with Unit” plans, enacting mandatory barrier mask policies, and installing handwashing stations in each facility. Each facility has also taken a number of steps specific to their unique environment. Those plans can be viewed here: https://mn.gov/doc/about/covid-19-updates/facility-specific-covid-19-responses/

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