Minneapolis, Minn. – This evening, a 57-year-old man incarcerated at MCF-Faribault died at Abbot Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis. He had recently been diagnosed with COVID-19.

The identity of the man is being withheld pending full notification of next of kin.

On behalf of the Department of Corrections, I extend our deepest condolences to the family of this man,” said Commissioner Paul Schnell. “This man’s death is yet another reminder that even as we begin vaccine distribution in our state, we must maintain vigilance to prevent further spread of COVID-related disease. Our agency will continue our efforts to prevent spread in our facilities,” Schnell added.

Three other incarcerated men remain in critical condition in area hospitals being treated for COVID-related illness.

The Department of Corrections has begun to vaccinate healthcare staff and vulnerable incarcerated people who are in long-term care settings. The vaccine is being provided in phases as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and the Minnesota Department of Health.

Minnesota’s vaccine distribution plan follows federal guidelines and starts vaccine distribution with the frontline healthcare workers most at risk of contracting COVID-19 and individuals living in long-term care facilities who are most at risk of serious COVID-19 complications. Some of the people who fall into those categories live and work in Minnesota’s prisons, and are part of the initial groups getting the vaccine.

The DOC has three long-term or special care units: The Transitional Care Unit at Oak Park Heights for males with acute conditions, the Linden Unit at Faribault for geriatric males, and the Monahan Unit at Shakopee for women who are in either of these categories. Our long-term care units fall under the Centers for Disease Control’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices direction for phase 1-a vaccination priority.

This is the 10th COVID-related death of an incarcerated person in the Minnesota DOC system since the pandemic began. It is the sixth death from MCF-Faribault. Faribault currently has 196 COVID-positive incarcerated people, and 41 COVID-positive staff. There are 1,696 people currently incarcerated at MCF-Faribault.
The DOC has conducted comprehensive testing of all incarcerated people and staff in our facilities, and has taken measures across the system to manage the risk of COVID-19 entering facilities and spreading, including: implementing “Stay with Unit” plans, enacting mandatory barrier mask policies, and installing handwashing stations. Each facility has also taken a number of steps specific to their unique environment. Those plans can be viewed here: Facility Specific COVID-19 Responses / Department of Corrections (mn.gov). MCF-Faribault-specific plans can be viewed here: MCF-Faribault COVID-19 Response / Department of Corrections (mn.gov).

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