Internal Memo

Date:  12/23/2021

To:  Incarcerated Populations

From:  Deputy Commissioner Michelle Smith

RE: Visiting Closure

We recognize the importance of connections with your loved ones and having the ability to see them in-person, and to that end we have some difficult news to share. We will be closing visiting until at least January 17th in all Minnesota State correctional facilities.

We must take this step to protect the safety and wellbeing of our people who are incarcerated, our staff, and our loved ones. The reasons are specifically related to the expected ‘explosive spread’ of the Omicron variant, the lessened effectiveness of vaccines against the variant, and the limited treatment options at this time.

Community transmission of COVID across the state is already high with 20% of the cases being the Omicron variant, and it is expected nearly 100% of the cases will be Omicron by the Jan 1st.

We are closely monitoring the situation in consultation with the Minnesota Department of Health. We will keep you updated as the situation develops, including if there are any changes to the current visiting guidance prior to reopening.