



NEWS RELEASE

STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

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MDHHS Order Protects Staff, Youth at State's Juvenile Justice Facilities with COVID-19 Testing Requirement

LANSING, MICH. – Youth, staff and community members will be better protected from COVID-19 under an emergency order from Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Director Robert Gordon that requires testing of employees of the two state-run juvenile justice facilities.

Gordon signed the order Friday and it has immediate effect.

“COVID-19 testing to identify positive cases so that state and local health officials can take quick action to limit outbreaks is an important strategy,” Gordon said. “Testing – along with wearing masks, social distancing and frequent handwashing – is especially important in settings such as our juvenile justice facilities where youth and staff come in contact with others.”

Testing is required for staff at Bay Pines Center in Escanaba and Shawono Center in Grayling – the two state-operated facilities that support juvenile offenders. Subject to availability of testing supplies, the facilities must:

- Test each staff member as soon as practical and then test all newly hired staff.
- Test any employees who are in close contact with someone with COVID-19 or who exhibits symptoms.
- In facilities with any positive patient or staff cases within the last 14 days, test on a weekly basis all staff scheduled to work that week until no positive cases are identified within the last 14 days.
- Exclude from work any employees who are required to be tested but are not.

The emergency order also requires the juvenile justice facilities to take all necessary precautions to prevent transmission of COVID-19 – which may include requiring any staff suspected of exposure to COVID-19 to be tested outside the facility – and exclude from work staff with COVID-19 until they have met return-to-work criteria established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

This order provides the same testing requirement as the order signed for prisons, veterans' homes and state-operated psychiatric facilities. Under a recently signed letter of understanding, union-represented employees of the juvenile justice centers will be provided 80 hours of additional sick leave that can be used after other leave credits have been exhausted due to a positive test or after close contact quarantine. This also was offered to correction officers, health care workers and staff at state-operated psychiatric facilities and centers.

Further details can be found in the [emergency order](#).

Information around the COVID-19 outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.michigan.gov/Coronavirus) and [CDC.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/Coronavirus).

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