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April 6, 2020**CONTACT:** Eric Solomon  
DJS Communications Director  
(O) 410-230-3164 (C) 443-492-9781**DJS Worker from Eastern Shore Becomes First Positive COVID-19 Case within State Agency**

*Baltimore* - The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) was notified on Sunday, April 5, 2020, that a staff member, who was working at Lower Eastern Shore Children's Center (LESCC) in Salisbury, tested positive for COVID-19. This DJS employee last worked at the facility on March 27, 2020 and has been in quarantine since that time. All staff and youth who were in contact with this worker are currently in quarantine. In addition, all facility staff and youth have been directed to wear protective masks.

The Maryland Health Department and DJS are currently in the process of confirming the test results. Further tests have been ordered and will be completed to identify and confirm the COVID-19 virus.

The Department is following guidance from the Governor and the Health Department as well as the Centers for Disease Control to minimize exposure to the virus. Furthermore, the DJS staff at Lower Eastern Shore Children's Center are working collaboratively with the DJS Medical Director and state and local health departments to ensure that all appropriate measures are taken. In order to minimize the number of individuals affected, DJS has taken precautionary steps at LESCC and across the state to contain the virus including:

- Strict infection control measures (including wear masks when out of his/her room)
- Enhanced hygiene and sanitation practices
- Limiting facility entry to only essential personnel and requiring all persons entering DJS facilities to complete a medical screening and temperature check
- Each youth newly admitted to DJS custody undergoes a thorough medical evaluation as part of the intake process. Newly admitted youth are housed separately until they have been monitored for COVID-19 related symptoms and cleared
- Modified movement and meal service that aligns with social distancing protocols
- Increased visitation through video and phone calls
- While DJS has maintained education services to date, DJS and MSDE are engaged in planning to transition to a distance learning model
- On-site and on-call medical staff available at all facilities
- In-person and remote mental health services available at all facilities
- Implemented 24-hour recorded hotline with latest DJS COVID-19 information

The symptoms of the COVID-19 illness include fever, cough, sore throat, difficulty breathing, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. As a precautionary measure of surveillance, all of the youth at LESCC are being monitored at levels for the listed symptoms of illness.

Any youth who display symptoms or test positive are put in isolation for at least 14 days and employees who display symptoms or test positive are quarantined at home for at least two weeks and must be medically cleared to return to work.

The safety of our employees, the youth in our care, and the communities we serve is our top priority. In addition, DJS continues to remain vigilant to keep the facilities safe and will evaluate the operations and conditions on a daily basis and make any necessary changes.

**Stay informed about the COVID-19 virus at [coronavirus.maryland.gov/](https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/) or call 2-1-1.**

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