

Confined
During
COVID-19

An essay written by

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Dear reader in this essay I will attempt to explain the harrowing circumstances residents of Potosi Correctional Center's Administrative Segregation^{unit} are experiencing. Potosi Correctional Center is located in Mineral Point, Missouri and is a level 5 maximum security facility. It is one of several institutions that make up the Missouri Department of Corrections Eastern region, it should be noted that Missouri's Eastern region is a burning hot spot for COVID-19, including Potosi Correctional Center (PCC).

Recently, PCC has seen an increase in positive cases of the novel Corona Virus. Several housing units have been quarantined and locked down in an attempt to stop the spread of COVID-19. Hundreds of residents have been quarantined, because they displayed signs and symptoms associated with COVID-19. Several of them have been taken to the local medical centers and others moved to quarantine units at other Missouri Dept. of Correction facilities such as ERDC (Bonne Terre). Potosi is also experiencing a shortage in staffing. According to staff members many guards are out sick or have tested positive for COVID-19 and are on quarantine. Only 10% of PCC workforce wear facial masks.

If they are not wearing mask here then they are exposing us to covid

it should be noted that in more mask usage is at 100%

Food / Canteen

PCC has been rocked by staff shortages, which has caused panic and outrage within the resident population of the facility. Recently the canteen manager became sickened with COVID-19, this effectively shut down the canteen store. Potosi CC canteen store is the only

approved vendor that inmates can use to purchase clothing, food and hygiene products. With the closure of canteen, many inmates were unable to effectively purchase needed items such as soap, shampoo and dishwashing detergent, which are all used to clean cells in general population. Also many items who used canteen food to survive, were now being forced by circumstance to go the canteen, where it is impossible to practice safe social distancing. It should be noted that the Administration did not close the canteen to punish the resident population and that they are working to fix the issue. Pray for us!

Medical Services

I am housed in Administrative Segregation, where there is currently no medical services at all. None, I repeat none. Our medications are not being refilled, life saving medications, have gone unfilled for weeks. The delivery of daily medications to residents is patchy, sometimes you get it, sometimes you don't. Many of the nurses/med tech's and LPN's have fallen ill or quit. The ones who are here, work 12-18 hour shifts and are overwhelmed by the capacity of the job, they need help, training and a miracle. In 2-house were I live, we have not had any sick calls by nurse (sick calls should happen daily per policy but no one is conducting sick call) since 10/04/2020 and today is 11/11/2020. We have not had any access to emergency medical care. If you are sick in 2house, you just deal with it the best way you know how. We have no access to health service request

forms, and there is currently not a licensed practicing Physician on staff, only a nurse practitioner who does not have the proper training to run a medical facility. This is a disaster awaiting to happen. Recently one resident of 4 house died, due to the COVID-19 and another because of old age, according to staff reports.

Cleanliness/Sanitization

In 2 house where I live, sanitizing the common areas and the cleaning of cells is not a priority. It has not been a priority before COVID-19 and it seems its less of a priority since COVID's arrival. We are living on borrowed time. We donot have an adequate amount of anti-bacterial soap nor do we have access to cleaning supplies or hand sanitizer. Inmates who are fortunate enough to buy soap are allowed to purchase 2 bars of soap a month that include Dial, Dove, Black & White Soap, Zest and Tone. Those who are not as fortunate have to rely solely on state sponsored soap (a 2oz bar of soap) that is passed out once a week. We need people on the outside to call the administration at Potosi CC and advocate on our behalves, we need to be able to properly clean our cells, we need hand sanitizer, and we need cleaning supplies, a temporary removal of the 21.50 spend limit, and more frequent opportunities to shop at the canteen. (we currently only go once a month in 2 house/ Admin-Segregation). We also need access to the phones and media device in order to check on our family/friends.

Communication

In Administrative Segregation, we are effectively cut off from the outside world. We are not allowed to call our families, we do not have access to our media devices so that we can send/receive emails, and we can only purchase a limited amount of envelopes and postage stamps. This is cruel and unusual punishment, we deserve the right to do welfare checks on our family and friends, and they deserve the right to know whether we are okay. It is my belief they are limiting our access to the communication devices, so that we cannot reveal the dire circumstances we face. Our conditions of confinement are that of a 4th world country. That's not how you rehabilitate or correct the behavior of a human being who will one day return to society. We have not seen the lifting of the visitation ban, we have not seen our families this year.

Conclusion

Dear reader, after reading this brief but vivid essay you should have become more aware of the harrowing situation residents of Pobsi CC are facing. Now that you know what will you do? You should call the director of Missouri Dept of Corrections Anne Preythe today or write her and tell her to fix the issues and to let all offender/residents of 2 house with no current/pending sanctions buy more canteen/food/soap and allow them to use the phones to communicate with their loved ones. Thanks for reading you guys, stay blessed and stay safe.

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