



PRESS RELEASE

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MDOC Commissioner Announces HIV/AIDS Task Force

Jackson – Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) Commissioner Robert L. Johnson today announced the creation of an HIV/AIDS Task Force that has begun work on identifying additional programs for inmates tested and diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. The task force is composed of 15 members representing health organizations, inmate advocacy organizations and MDOC employees.

“The focus of this task force is to identify additional rehabilitation, vocational and educational programs for these inmates,” said Commissioner Johnson. “I am confident that the diverse makeup of this task force will explore a number of successful programs that will help the department enhance the programs offered to inmates with HIV/AIDS.”

The HIV/AIDS Task Force is asked to provide Commissioner Johnson with plans that include the following:

- Details of programs, including success rates, that will enhance the rehabilitative, vocational and educational skills of HIV/AIDS inmates;
- Details on equipment, supplies and human resource needs to support proposed programs;
- A time line on implementing proposed programs; and
- Total costs associated with the full implementation of proposed programs.

The task force membership is diverse by design. Members have strong advocacy positions related to the HIV/AIDS inmate.

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HIV/AIDS Task Force

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“If we keep the overriding goal in mind, I know we can work together, not as adversaries, but as partners to increase programs that provide proven therapy, job skills and education to these inmates,” said Commissioner Johnson.

Members of the HIV/AIDS Task Force are:

Brenda Blanks, Chairperson
MDOC Director of Treatment Programs

Jackie Parker
CMCF Women’s Unit

Dr. Stanley Chapman, Medical Director
UMC Division of Correctional Medicine

Jacqueline Parker
MSP Director of Pre-Release

Mike Corbin
MDOC Director of Vocational Education

Janice Pierce, RN, CANP
MDOC Nurse Practitioner

Dr. Mary Currier
MSDH State Epidemiologist

Carla Shaw
Prisoner HIV Network

David Ingebresten
American Civil Liberties Union

Jackie Walker
AIDS Information Coordinator
ACLU National Prison Project

Maude Irby, Warden
MSP Unit 24

Ron Welch
Attorney at Law

Lawrence Kelly, Warden
MSP Central Security

Sara Williams
Prisoner HIV Network

Charles Orr
Comprehensive School Health Coordinator
Mississippi State Department of Education

There are a total of 218 inmates who have tested positive for HIV as of January 5, 2001. Of this total, 193 are males and 25 are females.

MDOC tests all inmates entering the correctional system for HIV, TB, syphilis, diabetes and general infections.