

April 20, 2020

Michael Carvajal
Director of Federal Bureau of Prisons
320 First St., NW
Washington, DC 20534

Dear Director Carvajal,

I write with deep concern for the health and safety of the incarcerated people and for the employees that work in our federal prisons. I respectfully request an update about any steps the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) is taking to protect federal prison facilities, specifically regarding the federal correctional institution in Sheridan, Oregon (FCI Sheridan).

My office has received numerous alarming reports from employees and family members of inmates at FCI Sheridan, alleging that proper precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are not being followed. In light of national reporting that has demonstrated the ferocious infectivity of COVID-19 in confined spaces such as prisons, it is of paramount importance that BOP address these concerns. This crisis must be met with the strictest commitment to the health and safety of everyone, whether incarcerated or not.

With this commitment in mind, please answer the following questions about the safety of FCI Sheridan during this crisis.

- How is BOP implementing social distancing requirements, including while prisoners are in cells, during mealtimes, and during work time?
- What procedures are BOP staff following when an incarcerated person begins to show symptoms of COVID-19 and how do those procedures change as the person either begins to recover or their condition worsens?
 - Additionally, how is BOP facilitating the isolation of ill inmates?
- Does FCI Sheridan have facilities and supplies to handle a surge of COVID-19 cases within the incarcerated population in the prison?
 - Please provide an estimate of your current stock of personal protective equipment, an estimate of how much FCI Sheridan will need, and any current plans to obtain more equipment.
- Does FCI Sheridan have a plan in place to ensure adequate staffing, should there be a workforce shortage due to COVID-19?
- Does BOP and/or FCI Sheridan have existing relationships and emergency plans with community facilities and partners to handle a more widespread outbreak or other serious emergency during this time?
- Since the Center for Disease Control has recommended wearing protective facemasks, has this been implemented in the prison system? Are incarcerated people allowed to wear masks?

- What other steps have been taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to BOP inmates and staff?

I respectfully request a response to these questions by no later than May 1, 2020. My office initially reached out to FCI Sheridan on March 27, 2020 and has not heard back from them or from the BOP. Everyone in federal prisons, from staff to inmates, deserves a safe environment, and I am eager to hear how the BOP is acting to create one. I appreciate the unprecedented situation you find your agency in and welcome a quick response as this situation demands urgency.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator