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## **DOJ OIG Releases Report of Remote Inspection of Federal Bureau of Prisons Metropolitan Detention Center Brooklyn Examining the Institution's Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic**

Department of Justice (DOJ) Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz announced today the release of the sixth report in a series of remote inspections the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has been conducting of Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) facilities and contract facilities. The report released today concerns Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) Brooklyn in New York City, New York.

The OIG's findings included the following:

- MDC Brooklyn followed BOP directives regarding testing symptomatic inmates for COVID-19; however, limited testing supplies inhibited the institution's ability to test other inmates to measure the true number of COVID-19 cases in April and May 2020. As of May 1, the institution had received only 30 test kits due to a national shortage of test kits at that time. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines did not prioritize testing asymptomatic inmates and MDC Brooklyn healthcare staff did not test all inmates.
  - As of May 5, during our fieldwork period, MDC Brooklyn reported that 6 inmates and 36 staff members had tested positive for COVID-19. As of October 18, MDC Brooklyn reported no active inmate cases among its approximately 1,400 inmates and no active staff cases among its approximately 460 federal staff.
  - The institution's self-contained, tiered housing units with closed cells on separate floors limited contact and potential cross-contamination among inmates in different units, and we believe that this housing arrangement likely contributed to the institution's low number of overall cases. MDC Brooklyn's implementation of BOP social distancing directives further limited interpersonal contact among inmates.
  - The shortage of medical staff at MDC Brooklyn was among the biggest challenges in appropriately screening inmates and staff members for COVID-19 symptoms. This shortage continued through September 2020 and resulted in MDC Brooklyn struggling to meet the medical needs of non-COVID-19 inmates. According to a review team sent by the BOP Central Office, 125 inmate sick call requests from March had not been scheduled or seen as of May 1. Institution staff reported 160 sick call requests, some dating back to July, which had not been scheduled or seen as of September 23. Sick call wait times increased significantly due to COVID-19, as the institution faced a much higher volume of sick calls compared to the year prior, according to MDC Brooklyn staff.
  - Although MDC Brooklyn officials complied with initial and subsequent BOP directives implementing CDC guidance on the use of face coverings, we found that in April and May some Health Services
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providers were unable to obtain the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) to evaluate inmates with COVID-19 symptoms and treat them in medical isolation. According to results from a late April OIG survey, MDC Brooklyn staff respondents were far more likely than BOP-wide staff respondents to report an immediate need for additional PPE, staff, or cleaning supplies.

Today's report does not include recommendations. Rather, our inspection reports are intended to assist the BOP and DOJ in identifying strategies to most effectively contain current and future COVID-19 outbreaks. Additional reports of the OIG's remote inspections will be released in the coming months as they are completed. The DOJ OIG also plans to prepare a capstone report providing BOP-wide conclusions and recommendations resulting from our inspections.

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