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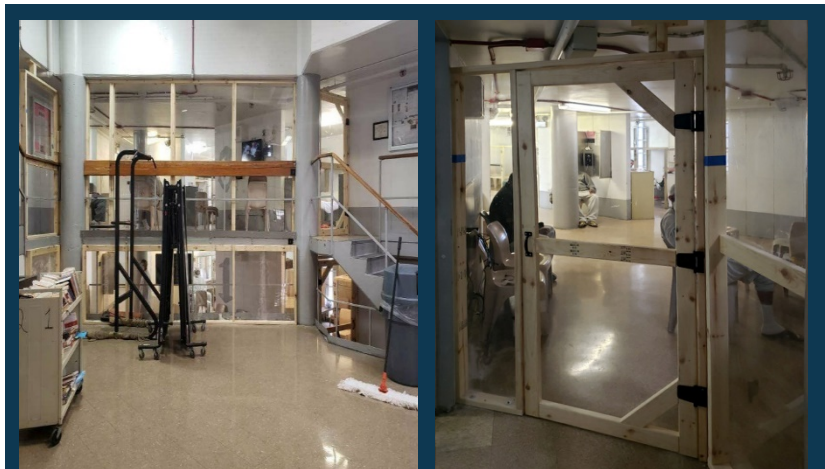
DOJ OIG Releases Remote Inspection of MCC Chicago Examining the Institution's Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic

Department of Justice (DOJ) Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz announced today the release of the fifteenth and final inspection in a series of remote inspections the DOJ Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has been conducting of Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) facilities since April 2020. The report released today concerns Metropolitan Correctional Center (MCC) Chicago, located in Cook County, Illinois.

The OIG's findings for MCC Chicago included the following:

- **COVID-19 Cases:** At MCC Chicago, the first COVID-19 outbreak occurred between April and May 2020. As of May 8, 110 MCC Chicago inmates had tested positive for COVID-19. As of February 28, 2021, 6 inmates had active COVID-19 cases and 39 staff had active COVID-19 cases. As of the issuance of our report, no inmates or staff have died.

- **Social Distancing and Quarantine:** We found that the institution's high-rise architecture, with a combination of open dormitory units and surrounding units of cells for housing two to four inmates, was one of the biggest challenges that officials faced in controlling the transmission of COVID-19. Ensuring effective social distancing was particularly difficult in the institution's two open dormitory units. We found that while MCC Chicago officials took steps to increase social distancing by constructing floor-to-ceiling plexiglass barriers, these



MCC Chicago staff constructed social barriers in the open dormitories to aid appropriate social distancing between inmates.

Source: BOP, with OIG enhancement

barriers were not completed until COVID-19 had already started circulating throughout the units and several inmates in those units had been confirmed as being COVID-19 positive. Nonetheless, we found, MCC Chicago complied with BOP social distancing and quarantine related directives.

- **COVID-19 Testing:** An initial lack of mass, rapid testing created significant challenges for MCC Chicago in controlling the early spread of COVID-19, particularly in the two open dormitory units. Several inmates in those two units became symptomatic for COVID-19 in April 2020 and were medically isolated, but the absence of mass testing during this time prevented MCC Chicago officials from identifying and medically isolating COVID-19 positive asymptomatic inmates in the same units. When mass testing later became available, a significant number of asymptomatic inmates in those two units tested positive for COVID-19. This delay in testing prevented timely separation of infected inmates, thereby increasing the likelihood of transmission. Receiving enough rapid test kits to conduct mass testing played an important role in MCC Chicago's ability to control the transmission of COVID-19 within the institution.
- **Sanitation Supplies and Cleaning:** MCC Chicago had a surplus of hygiene, cleaning, and sanitation supplies, which it began procuring in January 2020, for inmates and staff. MCC Chicago purchased personal hygiene supplies for staff and inmates and implemented enhanced cleaning earlier than the BOP required. In March, MCC Chicago had additional hand sanitizer stations for staff and announced new cleaning procedures for high-traffic areas. Inmate and staff sanitation and disinfection details were trained and deployed throughout the institution even though BOP guidance did not require it.
- **Use of Home Confinement:** MCC Chicago's use of home confinement in response to the spread of COVID-19 was limited. As an administrative security facility, MCC Chicago houses inmates at all security levels, including unsentenced pretrial detainees and sentenced inmates. As of August 2020, MCC Chicago had transferred only two inmates to home confinement under Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act authorities.

Reports: Today's report and an interactive timeline of events are available on the OIG's website at: <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/remote-inspection-metropolitan-correctional-center-chicago>

Ongoing BOP COVID-19 Work: This is the final report in a series of fifteen remote inspections of BOP facilities. The DOJ OIG is preparing a capstone report that will analyze all fifteen remote inspections and will make recommendations to BOP based on common issues we identified. The DOJ OIG is also conducting a survey of BOP staff, a survey of inmates, and a review of BOP's use of home confinement and other early release authorities provided under the CARES Act to manage the spread of COVID-19 within BOP facilities.

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