



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Release

BOONE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

1905 Indianapolis Ave.

Lebanon, IN 46052

Sheriff Michael T. Nielsen



August 11, 2021

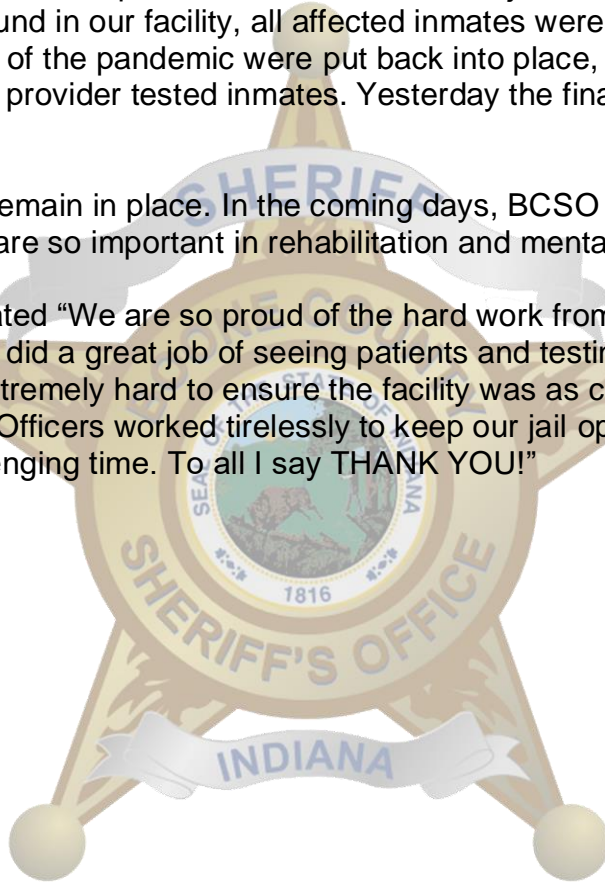
UPDATE

Boone County Jail Tests Negative for COVID-19

The Boone County Sheriff's Office is proud to announce that the jail is currently COVID free. Since the first positive case was found in our facility, all affected inmates were quarantined, restrictions that were made during the height of the pandemic were put back into place, the blocks were cleaned extensively, and our medical provider tested inmates. Yesterday the final tests were given and all tested negative.

At this time, restrictions will remain in place. In the coming days, BCSO will begin to look at restarting programs within our jail that are so important in rehabilitation and mental health.

Chief Deputy Tony Harris stated "We are so proud of the hard work from all of those that work in our facility. Our medical provider did a great job of seeing patients and testing all of our inmates. Our maintenance staff worked extremely hard to ensure the facility was as clean as possible. Most importantly, our Corrections Officers worked tirelessly to keep our jail operational and inmates as safe as possible during this challenging time. To all I say THANK YOU!"



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July 29, 2021

BCSO Reinstates Policies Due to COVID-19 Cases in the Facility

At the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, the Boone County Sheriff's Office created many COVID-19 policies to keep staff, inmates, and citizens safe. We were able to keep positive cases with our staff at a minimum and had zero cases with inmates. This was not the norm throughout Indiana and the country. It was a group effort with many agencies in Boone County, including the Health Department, courts, Prosecutor's Office, our medical provider, and law enforcement agencies.

In late May of 2021, BCSO began to "slow open" the jail by lifting some, but not all of the restrictions, and allowed more inmates to enter the facility.

On the night of July 16th, BCSO had its first confirmed case of COVID-19 of an inmate in our facility. The inmate was immediately quarantined per CDC guidelines and policies of the jail's medical provider, Quality Correctional Care. Masks were issued to inmates who shared the block with the positive inmate, and inmates were encouraged to wear the masks at all times. The block was sanitized the next morning and all inmates housed inside the block were offered a COVID-19 rapid test. No further positive cases were found. As a precaution, the effected block was placed on quarantine until July 19th. On July 23rd, two inmates from a different block tested positive. The two inmates were immediately removed from the block and placed in quarantine. All inmates in this block were offered a COVID-19 rapid test. Of the inmates who consented to the test, another 4 positive cases were found. All positive inmates were removed from the block and placed in quarantine. As a precaution, the effected block was placed in quarantine. We immediately began to work with the Indiana Department of Health (IDOH) and the Boone County Health Department, and reinstated policies. In addition, we tested all willing inmates. (128 out of 132) These tests resulted in 25 positive cases to date. These inmates immediately began a ten-day quarantine.

Of the 25 positive cases, eight inmates had been previously vaccinated. At this time, it is not known if these cases are "break-through", or what variant they are. BCSO is working with IDOH to determine this information.

BCSO also offered all staff to voluntarily take a COVID-19 test. Of all tests completed, two employees tested positive. They also immediately began a ten-day quarantine.

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Sheriff Nielsen stated:

"The rate that this virus has spread in our facility is very alarming to me. With the strict policies we had in place over the last 13 months we have been able to keep this virus out of our facility, not one case. We knew when we began to open the facility back up that we would probably get the virus into our facility but not to this level so quickly. I can assure you that we are doing everything we can to prevent the spread of the virus while making sure those infected are receiving the best medical care possible and at the same time trying to protect our dedicated staff that is working behind those secured walls every day. There are two things that we should all learn from this situation; (1) this pandemic is not over and (2) whatever variant this is that is in our facility spreads much quicker than we could have imagined. The IDOH, our local health department, our medical provider, and our staff, continue to work around the clock to mitigate this threat and identify the breakthrough cases and the type of virus we have. I want to thank them for that dedication and assistance. Please MASK UP and GET VACCINATED, to protect those that are vulnerable and to protect yourself"



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