



State of Connecticut Department of Correction

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For Immediate Release **Department of Correction Relocates Medical Isolation Unit to MacDougall-Walker Facility**

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The Department of Correction (DOC) has relocated its Medical Isolation Unit - used to care for Covid-19 symptomatic positive offenders - to the MacDougall-Walker Correctional Institution.

Previously the DOC transferred Covid-19 positive offenders with active symptoms to an isolation unit within the Northern Correctional Institution.

There has not been a symptomatic offender among the Department's incarcerated population since Wednesday, September 2, 2020.

The new unit is located within the MacDougall building of the MacDougall-Walker facility and was chosen based on its modern infrastructure, which is in line with the CDC guidelines pertaining to the care of incarcerated individuals during the pandemic.

The guidelines recommend a medical isolation unit to be equipped with cells having solid walls and solid doors, in addition to an efficient ventilation system.

The MacDougall building also has the unique advantage of having medical triage areas located within the housing units, allowing for immediate access to medical care.

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The Northern Medical Isolation Unit was established during the height of the initial wave of the Covid-19 pandemic back in early April, and at the time was the only facility which met the CDC guidelines and was readily available.

“Northern was the only option at the time, and it played an important role in helping to minimize the spread of the virus,” said Commissioner Designate Angel Quiros. “Thanks to the incredible work of our staff expediting the release of eligible offenders and the lull in infection rates, we have the opportunity to safely free up space within the MacDougall building.”

One of first actions taken by Commissioner Designate Quiros’ was to move the Covid-19 isolation unit away from the Northern facility. During the initial wave of the pandemic, Department staff discovered that some offenders tried to conceal their Covid-19 symptoms for fear of being transferred to Northern.

The establishment of the MacDougall Medical Isolation Unit is part of the DOC’s preparations for a potential second wave of the pandemic later this year.

“Given the extremely difficult, never before seen challenges our staff faced during the initial wave of the pandemic, they did an incredible job,” said Commissioner Designate. “However, there is always room for improvement. We’ve examined our initial response, identified and made the necessary adjustments, and now we are better prepared for the future.”