

Our Mission

The Department of Correction shall strive to be a global leader in progressive correctional practices and partnered re-entry initiatives to support responsive evidence-based practices aligned to law-abiding and accountable behaviors. Safety and security shall be a priority component of this responsibility as it pertains to staff, victims, citizens, and offenders.

From the Commissioner



Groundhog Day was officially observed on February 2, and unfortunately if you put any stock into the tradition, six more weeks of winter is on tap. I, however, thanks to some recent warm weather prefer to think that the groundhog got it wrong. I believe spring is just around the corner, and we have weathered the worst of winter.

A winter that brought us the Omicron variant of the Covid-19 virus. A variant that hit our staff extremely hard, to the point where we even reached out to recent retirees to ask if they wanted to come back to help out.

Fortunately, as quickly as the number of individuals testing positive for Covid-19 went up, the numbers came back down almost as fast.

Just like the original outbreak of the pandemic back in March of 2020, to the Delta variant, and now the Omicron variant you stepped up, met the challenge, and persevered. I cannot thank you enough for your efforts. I have said it before and I'll say it again, you – our staff – are the unsung heroes of the pandemic.

see **From the Commissioner cont. /page 5**

Delayed Graduations

The graduation ceremonies of Pre-service Class 284 and 285 unfortunately are two more casualties of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Class 284 ceremony originally scheduled for December 30, 2021, was cancelled due to the sharp spike in Omicron Covid-19 cases.

The graduation ceremony for Pre-service Class 285 had been originally scheduled for January 1, 2022, was rescheduled for February 10, 2022, was also eventually cancelled.

In the case of Class 285, each correctional facility held their own individualized ceremony on February 10, 2022. Each graduate was issued their badge, certificate, the PRIDE Award if applicable and a copy of the Department's oath – which was administered by a facility administrator.

Despite being deprived of an in-person graduation ceremony in front of family, friends, and their peers, their accomplishments still deserve to be acknowledged.

see **Adapting to Change /page 2**

November 25, 2021
through
February 16, 2022

Distributed bimonthly
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Pre-service Class 284 consists of a total of 44 graduates, made up of primarily Correction Officers. The group did also include four Correctional Substance Abuse Counselor Trainees, and one Board of Pardons and Parole Trainee.

As with each Pre-service Class, The Maloney Center for Training and Staff Development acknowledges the value of exceptional Trainees, and officially recognizes and commends them for service above and beyond the normal scope of their duties through the presentation of the PRIDE award.

The PRIDE award is presented to a trainee from each group who best represents the Department of Correction motto of PRIDE by demonstrating the values of: Professionalism, Respect, Integrity, Dignity, and Excellence. Trainees receiving the award were chosen by their class managers and the Pre-service Captain.

The recipients of the PRIDE award for Pre-Service Class 284 are:

- Alpha Group: **Joseph Aloï**
- Bravo Group: **Zachary Goldberg**
- Charlie Group: **Emir Kuljancic**
- Delta Group: **Ryan Schultz**
- Echo Group: **Tashira Vargas**

The other award that is traditionally presented during each graduation is the Victor E. Harris, Jr. Award, named in honor of a deceased officer whose enthusiastic dedication and commitment to correctional education and training still lives on in the memory of DOC staff. Prior to each graduation, the Pre-service Captain selects an outstanding instructor who has guided the class in a special way during their training.

Due to her dedication and loyal commitment to training the Pre-service trainees, the recipient of the Victor E. Harris Jr. Outstanding Instructor Award for Class 284 was: Lieutenant Casey Ramos.

Almost double in size of the previous group of trainees, Pre-service Class 285 consists of 86 graduates.

Again, the vast majority of the graduates (78) are Correction Officers. The remainder of the group was comprised of five Teachers, one Vocational Instructor, one Correctional Plumber, and one Correctional Substance Abuse Counselor.

The recipients of the PRIDE award for Pre-Service Class 285 are:

- Alpha Group: **Jason Bowns**
- Bravo Group: **Jonathan Dzurenda**
- Charlie Group: **Delroy Forbes**
- Delta Group: **Kyle Lewis**
- India Group: **Thomas Wilkerson**
- Echo Group: **Megan Farmer**
- Foxtrot Group: **Vincent Pastor**
- Golf Group: **Adela Martinez**
- Hotel Group: **Janina Morales**



Members of Pre-service Class 285 participate in the calisthenics portion of their training,

Additionally, Lieutenant Pedro Hernandez, assigned to the Cheshire Correctional Institution was chosen as the recipient of the Victor E. Harris Award for Pre-service Class 285.

Please join Commissioner Quiros, The Executive Team, and all the facility administrators in wishing all the graduates, from both Class 284 and Class 285, the best of luck in their new careers.

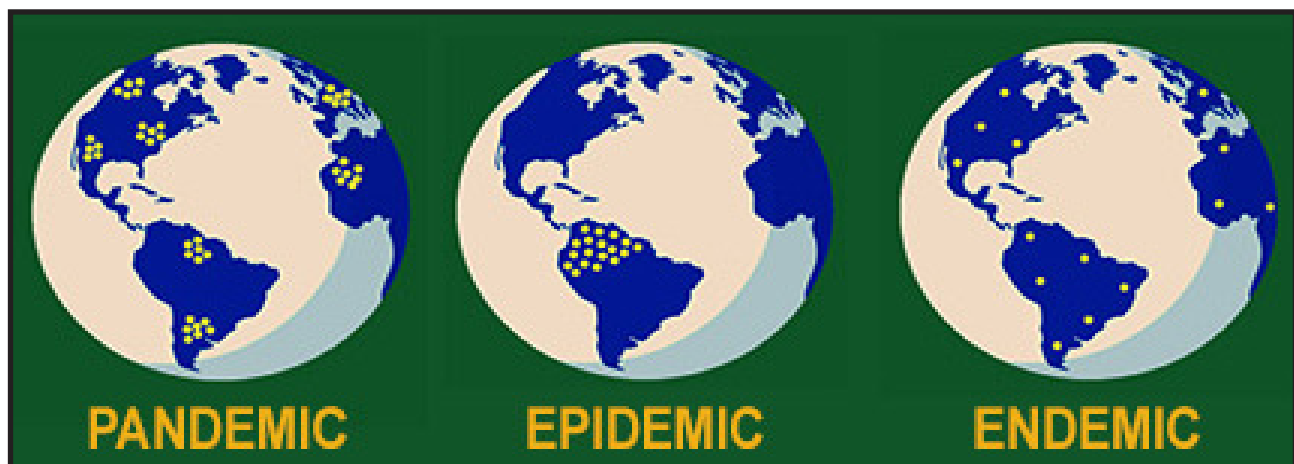
Epidemic, Pandemic and Endemic: What's the Difference?

Why experts hope we can transition COVID-19 into an endemic era

(this article was originally posted 01/21/2022 on the American Lung Association's blog *Each Breath*)

As we head into the third year of dealing with COVID-19, experts seem to agree that the virus that has been dominating our lives isn't going away any time soon. But that doesn't mean that we will be living through a pandemic forever. The hope is that advances like COVID-19 vaccines and new treatment options will help us move into a new state, an endemic state. But what is the difference between these two states of disease spread and what does this change mean for our lives?

Many experts say that COVID will likely lose its "pandemic" status sometime in 2022, due largely to rising global vaccination rates the widespread, less lethal, infection with the Omicron variant. "If the virus does become more seasonal, wearing a mask on public transit and indoors during COVID season could become the new normal and other familiar prevention strategies, like regularly washing your hands and maintaining distancing practices in high-risk settings, could also stick around during seasonal spikes," said Dr. Albert Rizzo, Chief Medical Officer of the American Lung Association.



Epidemic vs Pandemic

An outbreak is a sudden rise in the number of cases of a disease more than normal expectancy in a community or geographical area. An outbreak can be declared an epidemic when the disease spreads rapidly to many people. In December of 2019, the news was full of reports of an epidemic in Wuhan, China. Similar to an outbreak, an epidemic is defined by being contained in a small population, but the number of cases is larger than normally expected. Other examples of epidemics in our modern world include yellow fever, smallpox, and West Nile. Epidemics can also describe things that aren't contagious like teen vaping or obesity.

Many epidemics can be contained and do not spread worldwide. But this was not the case for SARS-CoV-2, a virus which quickly became more widespread, with cases present worldwide. The number of people affected was exponentially growing and the World Health Organization (WHO) upgraded COVID-19 to a pandemic in March 2020.

Pandemics are known to cause large-scale social disruption, economic loss, and general hardship, and COVID-19 has been no exception. Early on, people found themselves quarantined in their homes for long periods of time, isolated from friends and loved ones until experts could find a way to control the spread of the infection.

see [Defining What Ails Us](#) /page 6

Rainy Roadside Assistance

Driving to work in the early morning on Friday, February 4, 2022, Licensed Practicing Nurse (LPN) Robert Bonetti came upon a scene in which two State Police Troopers were attending to an individual lying on his back alongside the I-91 HOV lane in Windsor.

Bonetti, who has spent the last 17 years working at the MacDougall-Walker Correctional Institution, immediately pulled over to find a limousine driver who had lost consciousness, was not breathing, and had no pulse. Without hesitating Bonetti jumped in to assist the Troopers, who had already removed the driver from the vehicle and laid him on the highway.

"I had to stop, I wasn't about to let somebody die on the side of the road," Robert Bonetti said. "It would be bad karma."

Bodycam footage shows the crew out on the highway performing CPR on the patient in the pouring rain. Once the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) team



LPN Robert Bonetti providing emergency medical assistance by the side of I-91 North.

arrived, Bonetti and the Troopers continued to assist. A pulse was soon detected in the ambulance, though the driver was still not breathing on his own.

"I felt bad for the guy, he was older," recalled Bonetti. "He was older, I imagined he had retired and was working as a limo driver to make some extra money to spend on his grandkids."

Safely secured in the ambulance, and being attended to by the Windsor EMS professionals, the limousine driver was rushed to Hartford Hospital for further treatment. Bonetti then resumed his commute to the facility and joked that, "I still made it on time."

Commanding Officers of the State Police Troopers are recommending the responding crew for the agency's Lifesaving Medal.

"It's very gratifying - but not surprising - to hear of examples of selfless heroism by our DOC staff members even when they are not on duty," said Commissioner Angel Quiros upon hearing of LPN Bonetti's efforts. "His actions speak volumes about the quality of his character. I am thankful that LPN Bonetti is a member of the DOC team."

Around the Cell Block



MASSACHUSETTS - Officers at the Souza-Baranowski Correctional Center, the state's only maximum-security institution, will be equipped with body-mounted cameras for the first time as soon as this summer, in a \$1 million pilot program announced recently.

CALIFORNIA — California Governor Gavin Newsom, who three years ago placed a moratorium on executions, now is moving to dismantle the United States' largest death row by moving all condemned inmates to other prisons within two years.

MICHIGAN – The Michigan Department of Corrections has designated ten state prisons as having staffing levels so low that officers at those prisons can return to work five days after testing positive for COVID-19, even if still experiencing mild symptoms.

**Total CT DOC
Supervised
Population
on
February 16, 2022**

12,986

**On February 16, 2021
the population was
13,256**

From the Commissioner cont. from page 1

From our healthcare providers and our custody staff, not to mention all those working in records and population management behind the scenes managing the continuous movement to and from the Medical Isolation Unit. Let's not forget the incredible efforts of the CERT and Central Transportation Unit, and to anyone who I might have missed, you have my deepest gratitude.

With the promise of spring, along with the declining positivity rate, comes hope. In the case of Covid-19, the hope is that with the help of the vaccines and new treatment options the virus will transition to a new state - from that of a pandemic to an endemic. Much like the flu, a virus that is endemic is mostly seasonal (i.e. wintertime). Endemic virus's differs from pandemics in that the virus is not spreading out of control, and are more manageable. Despite the numbers trending in the right direction, I caution everyone to remain vigilant and to not let your collective guard down. It is the best, if not the only, way to keep the virus under control.

Next month will mark the start of the third year of the pandemic, and even though, as a group you have shown incredible adaptability and resiliency, the fact is that the past two years have been stressful for all of us.

As always, I encourage you to take care of yourself both physically and emotionally. Let me take this opportunity to remind you that the Department has partnered with a new Employee Assistance Provider (EAP) – Solutions EAP. To learn more about the services they provide you can go to their website at: <http://www.solutions-eap.com> Between the new EAP provider and the Agency's own Employee Assistance Unit (EAU), staff members have the resource available to them to get the assistance they need.

Thank you all again for your commitment to this great Agency.

DOC Ties to the Winter Olympics

As American short track speed skater Kristen Santos competes in the winter Olympics in Beijing, she will be cheered on by those with ties to the Department of Correction.

Kristen is the niece of Fiscal Administrative Supervisor Cheryl Santos, and the Granddaughter of retired DOC Records Specialist (Garner/BCC), Patricia Santos Pirhala.

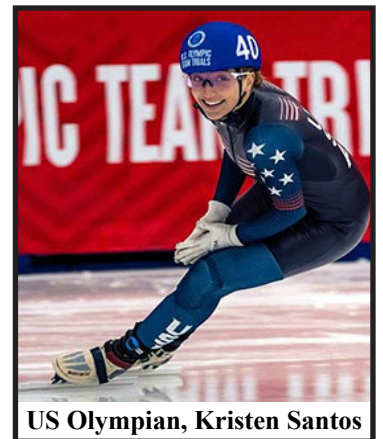
Kristen Santos is attempting to accomplish what no US woman has done in 12 years — climb on the Olympic short track medal stand.

Born and raised in Fairfield, CT, the 27-year-old started ice skating at age 3, when she took her first figure skating lessons. She turned her sites to short track speed skating at the age of nine. After graduating high school, she moved to Salt Lake City, UT where she began training for the Olympics eight hours a day, six days a week as part of the US National Team, while also attending the University of Utah.

The speed skating Santos has been competing at World Cups all over the world for the past seven years. She's ranked second in the world in the 1000m and fourth in the 1500m events. Santos is the lone American man or woman ranked in the top ten in the world in any short track event.

In December 2019, she went into the 2022 U.S. Olympic Team Trials in Salt Lake City as the top US woman in short track speed skating and the American record holder in the 1,000 and 1,500 meters. Then she swept the first round of trials finals and became the first U.S. speed skater to qualify for the Olympic team.

During the course of the 2022 Winter Olympics, Santos will compete in the 500m, 1000m, 1500m and women's relay events. Back home in Connecticut, the Santos clan will be cheering on – and hoping for the best for - their family's speed skating phenom.



US Olympian, Kristen Santos

Defining What Ails Us from page 3

Pandemic vs Endemic

The availability of the COVID-19 vaccine was a key step toward ending the pandemic or transitioning into an endemic. Enough people need to have immune protection from the virus for it to become endemic, highlighting the importance of vaccination. Though an endemic is a constant presence in a community, it differs from a pandemic because the virus is somewhat contained and not spreading out of control and not stressing the health care infrastructure, therefore, we can more easily prevent and treat it. For example, the flu is a common endemic virus for which there are treatment options and a yearly vaccine. However, there can be outbreaks of flu that can lead to an epidemic, with the potential to occasionally become a pandemic as was seen with the H1N1 flu of 2009.

Other Respiratory Pandemics:

The Spanish Flu of 1918, Tuberculosis, and the H1N1 Flu of 2009. Though SARS-CoV-2 may never go away, experts want to understand it so that we can return to our normal ways of living. By creating a vaccine and finding effective treatment options, the goal is for COVID-19 to be less deadly and destructive. Mutating variants of the COVID-19 virus have unfortunately delayed this transition. There are many who believe Omicron is the final wave of the pandemic. That thought is based on the feeling that there will be so much immunity in many populations due to the overwhelmingly easy spread of the Omicron variant that transmission rates will drop, and SARS-2 will transition into something more akin to the influenza-like illnesses that sicken people during the winter months, but are far less disruptive than the pandemic has been. If transmission slows, hopefully so too will the virus's accumulation of mutations that could avoid our treatments or immune protection.

How COVID-19 Can Become Endemic

Earlier in the pandemic, many experts agreed that the goal was to reach herd immunity, which is when enough of the population has been vaccinated or recovered from the infection that a resistance is built up, thus slowing the spread of the virus. However, now that we better understand how the virus mutates and spreads, and immunity wanes over time, eradication has proven unlikely.

A key step is getting as much of the population to receive the recommended COVID-19 vaccine and boosters as possible. The availability of new treatment options, such as monoclonal antibody or antiviral treatments, are also poised to move us in the right direction. Until then, keeping masks on and maintaining social distance and hygiene practices is the best way to help us one day move into this new endemic state.

Veterans Day Celebrated at BCC

Back in November, the staff of the Bridgeport Correctional Center held a Veterans Day Recognition ceremony to honor all the staff members who work at Bridgeport and have also served in the country's Armed Forces.

Correction Officer Oscar Ramos coordinated the event, which was held on November, 10, 2021. As a Marine, he is understandably very passionate about supporting our military personnel. Each staff received a certificate from the Military Peer Support Program (MPSP) signed by the Commissioner, as well as both Deputy Commissioners. In addition, the names and the branch of service

of the US Armed Forces veterans who work at the Bridgeport Correctional Center were added to the facility's plaque of recognition. The plaque is on display in a place of honor in the main hallway of the facility.



Bridgeport CC Warden, Carolyn McClendon (c) with some of the facility's veterans.

New DOC EAP Provider - Solutions EAP

The Department of Correction has recently partnered with a new Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider – Solutions EAP.

Solutions provides employee assistance programs to more than 130 organizations nationally, covering over 50,000 employees and their family members. They work with many different organizations, and have significant experience working with governmental agencies. They are the current EAP provider for other Connecticut State Agencies including: The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, The Department of Social Services, and The Department of Children and Families.

Employees covered under Solutions EAP can access services for a wide range of concerns.

Stress, Anxiety, & Depression
Family & Parenting Problems
Smoking Cessation
Bereavement & other Losses
Child and Elder Care
Layoff Solutions
Family Violence

Marital & Divorce
Alcohol & Drug Dependencies
Budget & Debt Problems
Change in the Workplace
Compulsive Gambling
Eating Disorders
Traumatic Incidents



1-800-526-3485

Solutions account managers are highly experienced, Master's level, Certified Employee Assistance Professionals. With a comprehensive and diverse national provider network, Solutions is well-equipped to deliver employee assistance services regionally and nationally. Specialty services include education and training for managers and employees, organizational development consultation, critical incident response, work/life services, substance abuse evaluations, and more.

The best way to access counseling services offered by Solutions EAP is to call:

Solutions EAP
1-800-526-3485
Phones are answered 24/7

The EAP services are strictly confidential. No one will know you have contacted the program, and your name is not reported to your employer. Records are kept separate. The records are informal and are not part of your medical or personnel records. In fact, no one has access to the EAP records except for the EAP staff. The EAP is bound by the strictest legal and ethical guidelines and cannot release any information without your written permission. State and federal laws, however, mandate that in cases of child abuse, elderly abuse, or where a person may be a threat to his or someone else's safety, the counselor must notify the proper authorities.

The transition to a new EAP provider, in addition to the Agency's growing Employee Assistance Unit (EAU), is in keeping with the Department's commitment to staff wellness.

To learn more about Solutions EAP and their services, go to: <http://www.solutions-eap.com/>



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Corrections



Holiday Wrap-Up

Once again the generosity of the DoC staff shines through for those less fortunate

In what is an annual tradition various facilities and units throughout the Department of Correction show their generosity by collecting gifts for those who may otherwise go without during the holiday season. Below is a sampling of examples of the incredible charitable individuals who make up our staff.

Corrigan Correctional Center

As in previous years, Corrigan CC has teamed up with the Willimantic Office of the Department of Children and Families to help provide a better Christmas for some of the children in their care. Staff selected a “Christmas Tag” for a child and purchased items on their list. A total of 77 children’s wishes will come true this holiday season. The gifts were delivered by counselors Michelle King and Michelle Ramos.



Correctional Counselors Michelle King (L) and Michelle Ramos with Corrigan CC's bounty.

Parole and Community Services

Director Ellison is pleased with the amazing job staff did collecting toys for the Connecticut Children’s Medical Center. The toys no doubt brought smiles to the faces of the many children who are hospitalized during the holiday season.



The Hartford Parole District Office's Donations

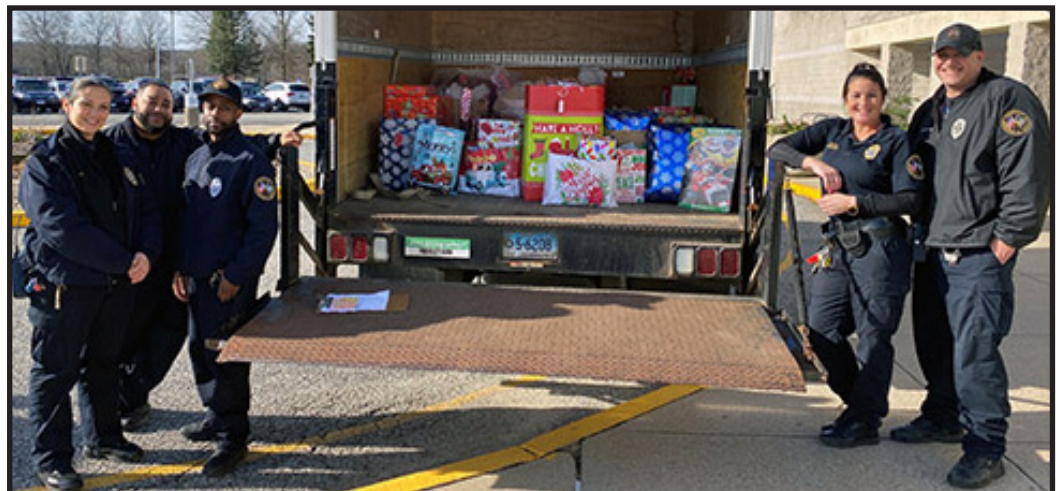
The toys were delivered to the children’s hospital in Hartford. Also, a special thanks to those that were overseeing their parole district and the delivery elves.

Security Division

The agency’s Security Division (with the support of Central Office staff) partnered with the Hartford Office of the Department of Children and Families to provide gifts for deserving children. Thanks in large part to the hard work of Administrative Assistant Veronica Melendez enough gifts were collected so that dozens of children had multiple presents under the tree on Christmas morning.

York Correctional Institution

The staff at York CI also teamed up with The Norwich office of the Department of Children and Families to collect gifts for children under DCF care. They collected so many presents, it took a box truck to deliver them.



Special Olympics
Connecticut



PENGUIN PLUNGE

Farmington

February

13

Winding Trails
50 Winding Trails, Farmington CT
Registration @ 8:00am | Plunge @ 10:00am

Middletown

February

26

Polish Falcons Nest #519
144 Prout Hill Road, Middletown CT
Registration @ 10:00am | Plunge @ 12:00pm

Shoreline / New London

March

6

Ocean Beach Park
98 Neptune Avenue, New London CT
Registration @ 10:00am | Plunge @ 12:00pm

Fairfield

April

2

Jennings Beach
880 S. Benson Road, Fairfield CT
Registration @ 10:00am | Plunge @ 12:00pm

Monroe

April

2

Great Hollow Lake (Wolfe Park)
DOC Silverstone Drive, Monroe CT
Registration @ 10:00am | Plunge @ 12:00pm

Register now: www.soct.org/plunge

2022 EVENT SCHEDULE



THANK YOU SPONSORS & YEAR ROUND SUPPLIERS

