

The Coronavirus as seen through the eyes of our Insiders

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Part XI: "I knew some of those who have died"

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Jay G. 5/5 (Seagoville, TX)

I am incarcerated at Seagoville FCI in Texas. Prior to this location, I was locked up at Oakdale from 2013 until August 2019. I am friends with many who are at Oakdale; I knew some of those who have died, and I am concerned for all who are there. The situation at Oakdale could have been prevented, or at the very least lessened significantly had the administration there actually taken the time to give a damn about the well-being of the population.

Oakdale is a death trap. The ventilation system in each of the housing units is inadequate, and with the coming of summer

heat, even with the air conditioning in those housing units, the virus will potentially spread to even more inmates and even staff. Those units there only get about 10% of fresh air; the rest is stale air that is continuously circulated from the cells into the common areas and back into the cells. The showers have very poor ventilation as well, and the high levels of humidity from the showers, that can carry the virus throughout the units, has nowhere to go. In the 6 1/2 years that I was there, the insides of the air ducts were NEVER cleaned. The cleaning chemicals used to "clean" the units were watered down so much that it virtually had no effect on sanitation efforts. The medical staff and most of the officers are completely indifferent to the well-being of those fellow inmates of mine at Oakdale.

Here in Texas, the number of infected inmates at Fort Worth FMC has reached over 400 with about 17 or so officers infected and one reported death. At Carswell FMC (female prison), the confirmed COVID-19 cases there is believed to be over 300, with two deaths, including one 30 year old woman who died after giving birth to a baby girl. It has been said that the baby was handled by staff who also had COVID-19 and died a few days after being born as a result.

Remarkably (if you believe it) there are no reported cases here at Seagoville. HOWEVER, nobody in the general population has been tested, and the administration and staff here constantly refuse to provide testing despite numerous requests. It could be here, but we do not know. I will give credit to the warden here; she is working hard to help us, but with limited resources, she only has what she is given to work with.

All of us here are worried about this virus, for ourselves, our families and fellow inmates at other facilities. Here is Seagoville, there are over 60 inmates who were housed in Oakdale for at least a year or longer there. To those of you out there who are truly trying to help us inmates in this

pandemic, reach out to us, listen to us directly. Just because we are inmates doesn't mean we don't have a story to tell or can't help you out there understand our troubles in here. Mental health issues are on the rise, people here are getting sick, but the seriousness of the virus here is unknown.

Editor's note: Jay G. is our original Insider. He created the Insiders and started the Insider columns in the Digest. The number of NARSOL Insiders grown monthly, and their contributions to our newsletter are among readers' favorites.