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The DOC's Next Great COVID-19 Idea

We have now all been tested for COVID-19 and we were all negative - as anyone with a lick of sense could have predicted. When it comes to COVID-19, one size does not fit all. The testing last week of the entire population of Stanley prison made no sense because everybody knew COVID-19 has never come into the prison. But now I think I know why they did it.

A new policy went into effect on Monday, July 13th. All staff and prisoners must wear masks at all times (except when a prisoner is in his cell) and all prisoners must eat and drink only in their cells - including all meals. Now why are these restrictions necessary when everyone knows there is no COVID-19 in the prison, there hasn't been any and if things stay the same, there won't be any for the duration of the pandemic? Because things aren't going to stay the same.

In order to transfer prisoners from prisons which have known cases of COVID-19 to prisons which have zero cases of COVID-19, the DOC has had to test and quarantine prisoners for 14 days. If they force us to wear masks all the time and eat in our cells, the likelihood of infecting the entire prison when one or more prisoners with COVID-19 are transferred in, is substantially reduced (social distancing is impossible in Stanley).

That's why I think they did the testing and imposed the new restrictions. The DOC got tired of not being able to freely transfer prisoners between prisons because of all the precautions they had to take so they settled on this solution. Of course the real issue is Governor Evers' refusal to reduce prison populations down to safe levels. If Stanley only held the 750 prisoners it was designed for instead of the 1,500 it usually has, social distancing wouldn't be a problem.

But this is all speculation on my part. There are other possible reasons. For one thing, the warden retired and the warden from Jackson prison is temporarily in charge of Stanley. She has had the mask requirement in Jackson since the pandemic started so she may be the reason. Also, the governor has ordered all state employees to wear masks at work including prison employees. We may have to wear masks just because the guards do.

Regardless of the rationale, Stanley is COVID-19-free and masks at this point in time are unwarranted.