

Letter to Bayport Community

Hello Bayport Residents—

For those of you I haven't had the privilege of meeting, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. I am the Warden of the Minnesota Correctional Facility-Stillwater, Guy Bosch.

MCF-Stillwater has an incredible history in Bayport. For over 100 years, this facility has been a large part of the fabric of this town and has certainly weathered over a century of history. Currently, we are experiencing a significant historical marker with the global pandemic of COVID-19. This pandemic has affected every part of the lives of the men who reside at our facility and the staff who work here.

Our corrections officers, nurses, maintenance staff, therapists, and many others are considered essential workers, and have come to work every day throughout this pandemic. I want to express my heartfelt thanks to them and recognize their service to the State of Minnesota during these difficult times.

You may have seen in the news that we have had a high number of COVID-positive cases in our facility. At one point, we had over 700 positive cases in our incarcerated population, and over 150 staff-positive cases. Our facility did not have a single positive case until late September. In fact, we were the last prison in the State of Minnesota to have a COVID case. It wasn't until we turned on the heat during a cold spell that our facility began to see positive cases and they spread very quickly.

In response, we placed the facility on a medical lockdown to slow the spread. We have doubled the flow of outside air into the heating system, increased our nursing and health services staff, and increased our behavioral health staff who respond to mental health concerns. We meet regularly with the MN Department of Health to discuss mitigation strategies and protocols.

On November 8th, you may have seen a protest in front of our facility. Protesters were mostly family members and friends of those incarcerated inside and were understandably concerned about their loved ones. The protest was peaceful, and we thank the organizers and the Bayport Police and Fire Departments for their assistance, along with our other law enforcement partners. We are grateful for the partnership of Bayport police and fire who are just steps away from our facility at all times.

Thankfully, we now seem to be coming out on the other side of the COVID crisis in our facility, with the majority of incarcerated men now considered "past-positive." Our hope is that we can get back to the business of transforming lives and return to a state of normal programming as quickly as possible.

Our staff, our incarcerated men, and our community have come together to support each other in fighting this pandemic. Thank you, Bayport residents, for your support of our facility. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

Warm regards and stay safe,

Guy Bosch

MCF-Stillwater Warden