



# SHERIFF DUSTIN D. HEUERMAN

## CHAMPAIGN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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### \*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\*

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The Sheriff has gotten multiple inquiries as to steps being taken to reduce the effects of COVID-19 in the Champaign County jails. Sheriff Heuerman and jail administration are working closely with the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District to continuously evaluate steps to keep both inmates and employees safe. "We are continuously working to reduce the jail population while also helping to ensure Champaign County residents are safe from violent crime," stated Sheriff Dustin Heuerman.

In collaboration with the other law enforcement agencies in Champaign County, the average number of daily jail intakes has gone from 15 per day to 4 per day within the last month. This is a result of officers issuing Notice to Appear citations for non-violent offenses, when possible, in lieu of making a physical arrest.

Jail administration also consults daily with the State's Attorney's office to evaluate inmates not accused of violent crimes, or who might be more vulnerable to COVID-19 than others, for potential release. This collaboration has resulted in an approximate 20% reduction in jail population over the last month.

The current "under roof" inmate population is 142. The jails have a total capacity of 295 inmates. There are also 15 inmates currently serving a sentence on electronic home detention (EHD).

Proactive steps are also being taken inside the jails to minimize exposure to COVID-19, including:

- Limiting unnecessary access to the jails (e.g., interns, program facilitators);
- Screening all corrections employees when reporting to work and requiring them to wear a mask while working;
- Screening all new inmates for signs and symptoms of COVID-19;
- Quarantining all new inmates for 14 days before they enter general population;
- Educating inmates on signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and encouraging them to report if they are experiencing symptoms or see another inmate experiencing symptoms; and
- Reducing inmate movement within the facilities and issuing masks that inmates are required to wear when needing to leave their housing unit.

Inmates always have access to free water and soap in their cells and are encouraged to wash their hands frequently, which is a "best practice" by the C-U Public Health District, Illinois Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control for minimizing spread of the COVID-19 virus.

To date there are no COVID-19 cases of inmates or staff at the Sheriff's Office.

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