**MAPE/DOC Statewide Meet and Confer**

**September 20, 2021**

**Via Microsoft Teams**

Present for MAPE: Zach Gahm (Chair), Tabitha Schacht (Vice Chair), Angela Halseth, Dori Maddox, Kevin Nelson, Ryan Patrick, Debbie Prokopf, Aarah Saugen, Lois Tucke

Present for Management: Commissioner Paul Schnell, Brian Collins, Al Godfrey, Teri Hable, Nan Larson, Curtis Shanklin, Michelle Smith, Jackie Sovick Lonne

Agenda

1. Old business (Updates):
2. Programming changes in the facilities
3. Testing/vaccine policy
4. Career promotional process
5. Legislative session planning

1. New business:
2. Commissioner’s weekly meetings

1(A): Programming changes in the facilities

MAPE asked for an update on planned changes. MAPE has heard that Faribault will be a pilot facility, involving therapists, case managers, and teachers.

Management stated that Behavioral Health is implementing a redesign of substance use disorder treatment. There is not a one-size-fits-all approach. They are developing a treatment model that best meets the needs of the incarcerated individual which may include treatment formats similar to primary, outpatient, and aftercare settings. Marina Furman is leading the redesign. It is not yet implemented. SHK, FRB, and ML have some groups running. STW won’t change much due to its small size. FRB may look more like outpatient treatment. ML will probably stay the same.

Management said that schedules have not changed yet but probably will. The commissioner has spoken about the need for expanded programming hours in order to accommodate education and industry opportunities for the incarcerated population. Teams from each facility will be looking at trying to figure out the needs and what works for them.

MAPE expressed a concern about how to work through an outpatient treatment model when so many facilities are still experiencing COVID outbreaks.

Management stated that smaller groups will be looking into that. This planning is for both during and after COVID.

MAPE stated that schedule changes can be very difficult for members. MAPE asked whether any actual plans for schedule changes are in the works, and how management plans to implement them.

Management stated that no specific plans are in the works. The expectation is that management will work with staff to ensure that we can provide programming and that staff are helping to determine what the schedules will look like.

Commissioner Schnell stated that management is not going to do things *to* people, but rather do things *with* people. This is a long way from being implemented. Management wants to find people who are interested in non-traditional hours. No one is going to be moved. That is not going to happen. Some people want different kinds of schedules. This is a retention issue: how can we meet the broadest needs of our people?

Management acknowledged that staff want flexibility. This is an exciting opportunity that will help with flexible schedules. The same philosophy applies to case managers: do things *with* people, not *to* people.

MAPE stated that this will remain as an ongoing agenda item because it is a deep concern for members. Management suggested pushing it toward the bottom of the agenda so that new, pressing items can be discussed first.

1(B): Testing/vaccine policy

Management stated that the question has been raised: what if a person is on vacation during the designated policy testing days (usually Tuesday/Thursday at most facilities)? Management has learned a lot in the first three weeks of the implementation of the policy. Currently, if the employee is on an approved leave on the assigned testing days, the employee is exempt from testing that week. Management noted that they are already seeing a trend of people calling in on Tuesdays and Thursdays and missing the policy testing. Management will be following up on that.

MAPE asked whether management considers this a potential abuse of sick leave.

Management stated that abuse is a strong word. Where there is a pattern of two or more call-ins on Tuesdays and Thursdays, the supervisors are supposed to have conversations with that employee so that the employee knows we are watching. Only a small handful of people are in this situation. Most employees are doing great.

MAPE asked for a status update on the delivery of Vault kits to field offices, central office, and Rosco.

Management stated that the kits should be delivered this week, and testing should start next week. Staff will be notified by email when they’re ready. They will need to report to the work location and pick up four kits, which they will then use to test each week on work time.

MAPE asked for clarification for central office employees who have a hybrid schedule. Management stated that those employees will only be required to test on weeks when they have to enter the office for more than 10 minutes. Only people who are teleworking 100% of the time will not be required to test.

Management stated that, in the field offices, each supervisor is to designate a discreet location for employees to access their test kits. They should not be placed in staff mailboxes.

MAPE asked why test kits are being sent to work offices rather than to employees’ homes. Management stated that the primary consideration was cost, but also that DOC has many inaccurate home addresses for employees, so they might not receive their tests at all.

MAPE asked if DOC will notify MAPE when a MAPE-represented employee refuses testing. Management stated that yes, MAPE will be notified when a Loudermill hearing is scheduled for such an employee.

MAPE asked about the timeframe for holding the Loudermill hearing after the employee has missed a testing opportunity. Management stated that, in general, a Loudermill must be held before there is any deprivation of pay. In some cases, the Loudermill may not be held until the next day, if the employee had left the premises before their failure to test was discovered. The Loudermill should be held first thing the next morning.

MAPE asked, if someone misses a testing day at the facility, can they get their own test in the community? Management responded yes, some people even test immediately after the Loudermill.

1(C): Career promotional process

Management stated that Brian Collins and Curtis Shanklin had connected about this. CCA and MACPO counties base their promotional criteria off DOC’s process, so it is necessary to reach out to them. In October, they will set up a meeting and invite MAPE representatives. They respect the uniqueness of Case Managers and Corrections Agents. They would like suggestions from MAPE that Al Godfrey can take to CCA/MACPO counties. A draft will be finalized in November.

Management stated that the promotional process was revamped in 2016. The value of the process is that it is fair and objective. It is also a staff-driven process. Staff have the ability to pass it themselves. Management also wants the process to be a learning opportunity. Al Godfrey, Dayna Burmeister, and Jake McLellan are willing to meet with agents to explain the methodology and how to prepare for the process. There is also an appeal process. Al Godfrey reviews appeals and investigates them. In some cases, that review has led to the denial being overturned and the agent being promoted.

1(D): Legislative session planning

Commissioner Schnell stated that DOC has submitted information to the Governor’s office. DOC has until the end of October to submit a supplemental budget. The session will be a short session this year. DOC is not overly hopeful about moving things forward. Nothing is formalized yet.

New Business: Commissioner’s weekly meetings

MAPE thanked Commissioner Schnell for providing this platform for communication with staff. It is good for membership to hear answers directly from the Commissioner, even if they don’t like the answer.

Commissioner Schnell stated that those weekly meetings came about as a result of the MAPE team’s request for better channels of communication with senior administration. The weekly meetings have not been perfect, but they have been positive overall. Management will evaluate how long these weekly meetings remain effective. Over time, they may have more impact at a less frequent interval. Other bargaining units have not been invited because management sees this as a pilot effort, and also there are communication infrastructure limitations (e.g. Rush City has only 12 phone lines in and out of the facility).

MAPE stated that the Commissioner is getting asked some really tough questions and asked if it would be helpful to ask staff to submit questions in advance. MAPE stated that members are afraid about the HRO issue; we don’t know what we don’t know, and the rumor mill is scary.

Commissioner Schnell stated that sometimes there are no good answers. DOC was surprised by the HRO too. He cannot speculate on the judge’s reasoning. He is not able to share all of the information. The court has the authority to determine credibility in its cases. Commissioner Schnell understands the fear of being thrown under the bus.

MAPE stated that the weekly meetings are a good place to quash rumors. It will help if members can give specifics related to their questions. Over time, it may be best to hold these meetings less frequently.

Commissioner Schnell stated that safety is partly a feeling and partly concrete. Perception matters.

Management asked whether the engagement that occurs between the unions and management here is more frequent and deeper than other agencies. How does DOC compare to others?

MAPE responded that engagement has improved with the DOC, but there is always room for more improvement. It’s difficult to compare directly to other agencies. DEED, for example, has a robust Meet and Confer relationship. MAPE looks forward to continuing to deepen our engagement with DOC.

Management reported that SEGIP has announced a premium holiday for health insurance in March 2022.

Adjourn