



# Ombudsman Update

## Announcements and Updates from the Office

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## FROM THE OMBUDSMAN

*By Lauren "Laurie" Andersen, MM, RN, CEN, CCRN*

My name is Lauren Andersen, but please feel free to call me Laurie. For almost 40 years, I have had the privilege of serving our communities and those in need as a registered nurse. During this time, I have been blessed to work in a variety of healthcare-related settings, including many years in critical care and emergency medicine. I have worked in other roles in healthcare during this time as well, including as a supervisor, manager, home care nurse, and consultant for the Massachusetts state hospital system. **Throughout that time, and as far back as I can remember, both my professional and personal goals, and my life's mission, have always been to improve the lives of others!** Driven by this desire, I am **thrilled to have started on my newest mission that I sincerely believe provides me with a genuine opportunity to continue doing what I am most passionate about – assisting others when they need it most!** This mission, however, is all about ensuring health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic – my most important role yet. Though adapting to this pandemic offers new challenges in providing care for the benefit of others, my goal nonetheless remains the same – helping those that need my help by making sure everything possible is being done to reduce the spread of COVID-19 among those that are housed or work at MA Department of Correction's facilities, and their families as well.

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## FROM THE OMBUDSMAN - CONTINUED

What that means is that I am working with all of you (staff, inmates, and families alike) to help stop the spread of COVID-19 in the DOC and to protect all individuals who are connected with the MA DOC system. Protecting the health and welfare of inmates, DOC staff, and their families, during the COVID-19 pandemic is no easy task, but I am confident that together we stand the best chance to limit opportunities for this virus to get the “upper hand.”

I have had the pleasure of visiting all of the DOC facilities and getting oriented with each correctional facility and to the individual personality of each facility. I look forward to working with all of you in each facility to listen to and understand your COVID-19 concerns.

*Laurie Andersen*

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## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Office would like to share with you a few items that have already been reviewed, including:

- ✓ **Concerns about the masks provided at the DOC facilities for DOC staff:** KN95 masks are available for all staff at all facilities now. Any staff member should be able to request and receive a KN95 to wear while at work.
- ✓ **Concerns about the availability of COVID-19 testing:** The *BinaxNOW* antigen testing should be available for all staff at the visitor testing site at each facility. MA DOC leadership has agreed that staff who are looking for a PCR test (especially during the winter season) can have that test done at any facility that is doing surveillance testing on that day. If the facility that you are working at does not have testing on that day, you can access the schedule and travel to another facility to have a test on the day that you need it.
- ✓ **MASAC at Plymouth COVID-19 concerns:** New committed persons who arrive at MASAC will be tested upon arrival to help awareness of COVID-19 infections and to prevent unnecessary contamination.
- ✓ **Communication:** The Office is working on this every day! We now have the website, email, and phone number (see “Contacting Us” section on the right side of this page for details). The Office will continue to visit facilities and to increase access to our work (like this newsletter and the posters at all facilities with information about this Office).

## ABOUT THE OFFICE



### Office of the Ombudsman

Independent COVID-19 Oversight to  
MA Department of Correction

The independently operated Office of the Ombudsman, run by Lauren M. Andersen, MM, RN, CEN, CCRN, Director/Ombudsman, monitors and reports on the Massachusetts Department of Correction’s efforts to limit the spread of SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) in the DOC’s facilities across Massachusetts.

## CONTACTING US



**Website:** <https://covidombudsman-madoc.org>

To reach the Office regarding a COVID-19 related inquiry or concern, please submit via our website by clicking [here](#). Inquiries can be submitted anonymously if desired. If you provide your contact information when filling out the form, the Office will use best efforts to respond within 2 business days.

We look forward to addressing your COVID-19 related questions, concerns, and inquiries.

**1-800 Number: 1-833-662-8410**

You may also submit your COVID-19 inquiry or concern via our telephone number. COVID-19 related inquiries may be left anonymously. If you would like a response from the Office, then please leave your contact information as instructed on the voicemail.