

# The Porous Boundaries Between Communities and Correctional Facilities: A Medical Recovery Site Resulting in Reduced COVID-19 Household Transmission Tied to Recently Incarcerated Individuals

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## Background

- In April 2020, a COVID-19 outbreak at a rural, resource-limited Department of Corrections facility on a Native American Reservation in Southeast Arizona led to multiple epidemiologically linked cases to household contacts of recently incarcerated individuals.
- We describe the role of a medical recovery site for isolation of recently released inmates with active COVID-19 infections in reducing household transmission of cases tied to the correctional facility.

## Methods

- On April 16<sup>th</sup>, an individual was contact traced to the correctional facility and was laboratory-confirmed positive, an asymptomatic index case in the jail.
- Testing of all inmates continued from April 16<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>.
- On April 24<sup>th</sup>, decarceration began.
- All inmates released from the facility April 24<sup>th</sup>-April 30<sup>th</sup> were contact traced for 14 days to monitor for new household cases.
- On April 30<sup>th</sup>, the tribe opened a medical recovery site for isolation.

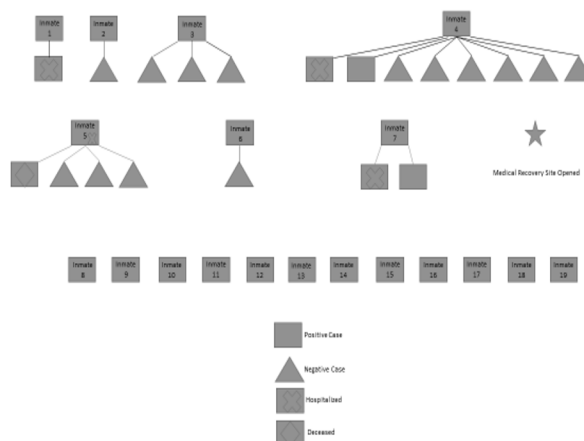
## Methods (cont.)

- Contact tracing efforts continued in the community thereafter and all recently released individuals were contact traced 14 days after departure from the correctional facility.

## Results

- Between April 24<sup>th</sup> -30<sup>th</sup>, 16 inmates were released from facility.
- Seven were laboratory-confirmed positive.
- Secondary infections only occurred in households of positives.
- Of the seven households, four experienced secondary transmission of virus.
- There were 27 household contacts with six secondary infections (secondary attack rate of 30.0%).

Figure 1: Household Secondary Infections with Epidemiological Links to Previously Incarcerated Inmates Before and After Opening of Medical Recovery Site



## Results (cont.)

- There were four hospitalizations and one death, though cause of death was not due to COVID-19 despite incidental finding.
- After opening of the medical recovery site, all individuals with active infections (12 cases) agreed to isolation at the site.
- This intervention resulted in no further epidemiologically linked cases from recently released incarcerated individuals to the community.

## Conclusions

- Prior to the establishment of a medical recovery site on a Native American reservation, a significant burden of disease in the community was linked to recently incarcerated individuals.
- After opening, all actively infected individuals who were being released from incarceration agreed to isolation at site, resulting in no further household transmission of COVID-19 from an actively infected recently incarcerated case.
- This outbreak highlights porous boundaries between correctional facilities and surrounding communities, requiring attention and resources to limit transmission of disease to protect local populations.

## Acknowledgments

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