

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA
MIDDLE DISTRICT**

AND

**COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF HUNTINGDON COUNTY,
PENNSYLVANIA**

IN RE: 20 th Judicial District – Compliance :	33 MM 2020
with the Supreme Court’s Order :	CP-31-MD- <u>118</u> -2020
Addressing the Threat of COVID-19 :	AO-14-2020
Infections in Juvenile Facilities :	

**NOTICE OF COMPLIANCE AND
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER**

AND NOW, this 14th day of April, 2020, pursuant to the Supreme Court’s Order of April 7, 2020, in case 24 EM 2020¹ (the “Juvenile Protection Order”), its Orders of March 16, 2020, and April 1, 2020 (Nos. 531 and 532 Judicial Administration Docket) in case 33 MM 2020, and this Court’s Declaration of Judicial Emergency, issued March 16, 2020, and Extended Declaration of Judicial Emergency, issued April 1, 2020, all addressing matters related to the outbreak of COVID-19, the Court provides notice of its compliance with the Juvenile Protection Order, and issues an Administrative Order outlining the procedures for such compliance, as follows:

1. On April 8, 2020, the Court held a Zoom video meeting with relevant county stakeholders regarding the Juvenile Protection Order, including the Huntingdon County District Attorney, District Court Administrator, Sheriff, Commissioners, Director of Probation, and Director of the Office of Court Appointed Counsel, along with the Huntingdon Borough Chief of Police and the Pennsylvania State Police Huntingdon Barracks Commander.

¹ IN RE: The Petition C.Z., A.O., and Z.S.-W., On Behalf of All Similarly Situated Individuals.

The Original of the Document has
been filed in the Office of the
Prothonotary/Clerk of Court on
APR 14 2020

2. The Director of Probation advised that Huntingdon County has 10 juveniles who are currently in placement at long-term facilities. Each of these facilities has procedures and processes in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among their respective populations, including a full shutdown of all home passes and outside visits and quarantine of all new placements.
 - a. Of the 10 juveniles currently in placement, 4 are sex offenders, and the consensus among the stakeholders is that they are not good candidates for early release, due to the intensive nature of the programming and treatment they need.
 - b. Two of the juveniles in placement are nearing the time when it would be appropriate to release them, and continue programming and treatment in a community setting. However, both of these juveniles do not have stable housing available, and early release is thus inappropriate.
 - c. The general consensus among the stakeholders is that protection of juveniles in placement is the ultimate goal, regardless of whether it requires continued placement or early release, but that releasing any of the juveniles currently in placement would likely cause more harm than good for them on an individual level, based on their programming and treatment needs, the unavailability of stable housing and home environments, and the fact that community programming is all but unavailable due to the current stay-at-home order. As long as the placement facilities continue to follow good infection control practices, these juveniles are likely safer in placement than on release.
3. The PSP Huntingdon Barracks Commander outlined the steps that PSP is taking both in regard to the processing of juveniles subject to arrest and in determining which juveniles should be arrested and processed for possible detention at this time. These steps are being followed generally statewide by PSP, and the Huntingdon County Sheriff and Huntingdon


Borough Chief of Police relayed that their departments are following similar procedures, and have been in regular contact with PSP regarding best practices.

- a. Arrest procedures largely follow the screening, social distancing, and medical consultation protocols as for adults.
 - b. A recent incident involving a felony assault with a weapon involving a juvenile was discussed and used as an illustrative example of current practices. The incident happened a few days prior to the Zoom meeting. PSP troopers on scene contacted the President Judge, District Attorney, and the Director of Probation to determine how to handle the incident. Temporary placement with a relative, rather than immediate detention, was determined to be appropriate, pending further proceedings.
 - c. Future incidents involving juveniles will be handled in a similar fashion, with the determination of immediate arrest and detention versus release and follow-up to be made on a case-by-case basis.
4. Commissioner Mark Sather advised regarding the temporary detention facility that houses juveniles on behalf of Huntingdon County and other counties in the area, Central Counties Youth Center in Bellefonte, Centre County.
- a. CCYC has a capacity of 14 detainees, and currently houses 2 (both from other counties). It is currently on reduced staffing to reduce the risk of introducing or spreading COVID-19 in the facility.
 - b. CCYC has developed and implemented a 14-day quarantine protocol for all new detainees, and further has developed a quarantine protocol in the event that any detainee becomes infected with COVID-19.
5. Going forward, until the termination of the Judicial Emergency, and in addition to the procedures above, Attorneys representing juveniles in

placement or detention who believe that their client is a good candidate for early release in order to reduce their risk of suffering a COVID-19 infection shall petition the Court for early release on those grounds. The Court will conduct a hearing on such petition via advanced communication technology, giving all relevant stakeholders (including alleged victims) the opportunity to respond, within a reasonable time after the filing of the petition.

6. All county stakeholders who participated in the video meeting have committed to conferring regularly going forward regarding the matters set forth herein, including revising practices and procedures as new information becomes available, with the ultimate goal being to serve the interests of public safety and prevent or slow the further spread of COVID-19.

BY THE COURT:



George N. Zanic, President Judge

- C: Irene Bizzoso, Esq., Supreme Court Prothonotary
Geoff Moulton, Court Administrator of Pennsylvania
Stacey Witlec
Kay Coons, Prothonotary/Clerk of Courts
Jeffrey E. Leonard, Sheriff
Leonard Hahn, Director, Probation Department
David G. Smith, District Attorney
Fredrick Gutshall, Esq., Director, Office of Court Appointed Counsel
Angela J. Robinson, District Court Administrator
Huntingdon County Bar Association