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Date: July 27, 2021
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MDOC FREEZES VISITATION AT PRISONS

JACKSON, MS – Mississippi Corrections Commissioner Burl Cain announced today that to protect Mississippi’s 17,300 prisoners, **MDOC is suspending all visitation in state prisons until further notice** to diminish the possibility of infection from the COVID Delta variant.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention reported Monday that the seven-day moving average of COVID cases shot up 46.7-percent in one week.¹ Hospitalizations rose 32.2-percent in the same period. CDC reports that the Delta variant accounts for 83-percent of new cases and 93-percent of those come from unvaccinated groups. As of Monday, Mississippi Department of Health officials reported that less than one-third of Mississippians, or 32%, have been vaccinated.

“With two-thirds of the state still unvaccinated, we have to protect inmates from outbreaks on the outside,” said Commissioner Cain. “We can’t risk exposure to the highly-contagious Delta variant so we are redoubling our efforts again to sanitize and spray all facilities. That worked the first time because Mississippi prisons had some of the fewest cases and by far the lowest number of COVID deaths of any other prison system in the southeast U.S.”

Starting in February, MSDH prioritized vaccinating prisoners, giving over 20,000 vaccines to MDOC. To date, 99-percent of inmates at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility have been fully vaccinated; 93-percent at Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman; and 82-percent at South Mississippi Correctional Institution in Greene County.

“Resuming visitation,” said Cain, “depends entirely on how quickly the Delta variant is under control.”

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/covidview/index.html>