



Sheriff Robert Jonsen
Office of the Sheriff
Santa Clara County
55 W. Younger Avenue
San Jose, CA 95110

PRESS RELEASE

Elmwood Correctional Facility Fentanyl Exposures

DETAILS:

The Elmwood Correctional Facility has experienced a substantial amount of Fentanyl overdoses in the last week; a total of thirteen inmates and two subsequent staff exposures during response. The first of these incidents was on March 8, 2023 when two inmates were identified as having serious medical emergencies. Both inmates were provided medical attention and several doses of Narcan by Sheriff's deputies and jail medical staff. Both inmates were transported to local hospitals for further assessment. Both inmates were in stable condition when they left the facility, and both have since returned. In addition to the two inmates, one deputy who responded was affected and began showing signs of possible exposure. The deputy was also transported to a local hospital for assessment and is currently doing well.

On March 9, 2023, two similar medical emergencies occurred. In the first incident, the deputy witnessed an inmate acting erratically. Based on the deputy's training and experience, the deputy requested assistance and Narcan believing the person was under the influence of an unknown substance. The inmate was provided Narcan and transported to a local hospital for further assessment. Simultaneously, deputies were alerted to another inmate who was unresponsive and not breathing. The deputies immediately initiated life saving measures to include the introduction of the AED machine, Narcan, and CPR. The inmate was provided several doses of Narcan. He then began breathing and regained consciousness. The inmate was also transported to a local hospital for further assessment and treatment. In addition, two Adult Custody Health Nurses were transported to local hospitals after they experienced symptoms of a possible exposure during their response.

Unfortunately, nine similar incidents occurred since then. All inmates were given several doses of Narcan and were treated at local hospitals. All are expected to make a full recovery.

It is important to note that any time Narcan is administered, the affected person is sent to a local hospital via ambulance where they are further treated and assessed. It has been confirmed by test results that Fentanyl was the cause of these medical emergencies.

The Sheriff's Office along with the Elmwood Facility Administration have taken extraordinary measures to ensure that inmates and staff are safe. From the onset of the first incident, Correctional Staff began conducting multiple facility searches and more frequent welfare checks of inmates in affected areas. The Sheriff's Office is also utilizing its K9 Unit in partnership with a DEA Task Force K9 and a Probation Department K9 to conduct numerous, systematic searches at the Elmwood Correctional Complex. Deputies have located additional illegal drugs during some of their searches. The Sheriff's Jail Investigation's Unit is investigating all of these incidents to determine how the illegal substances made it into the jail and to recommend criminal charges for those involved. The Sheriff's Office is also conducting safety and educational messages to those housed within the jail facilities, including via Housing Unit Message Screens and messages on Inmate Tablets.

The Sheriff's Office would like to acknowledge the training and swift actions of the deputies who responded, as well as the nurses from the Santa Clara County Custody Health Division. Without the deputies' and nursing staff's swift actions, several of the inmates may not be alive today. In addition, the Sheriff's Office would like to acknowledge the Milpitas Fire Department and County EMS professionals for their swift response and transportation of these individuals to local hospitals.

The Sheriff's Office is committed utilizing all available resources to ensure a safe and secure environment for those in the care of its correctional facilities.

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