

## April 16 Fort Belvoir Garrison Virtual COVID-19 Town Hall Recap

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**COL Greenberg:** I'm Colonel Michael Greenberg the Fort Belvoir Garrison Commander.

Thanks for listening in on this on this town hall, as Capt. Cindy Judy, seated next to me, the director at the Fort Belvoir Community Hospital, and I update you on our situation and address questions and concerns that you may have on COVID-19. We'll have updates and answers on how we're continuing measures to take care of this this community and to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Town halls will continue, as needed or periodically.

DoD policy states that on DoD installations, if you cannot maintain a six foot distance, then **face coverings are required.**

**Tulley is now the 24-hour gate.** Pence and Farrar are open, also, until otherwise stated.

Social distance and protocols were put into place at the commissary. Our face mask **policy mandates** all patrons and those working in the commissary **must wear face coverings.**

Thank you to the first responders, Service members, civilians and contractors, all who are on the frontlines coming to work every day, and ensuring our people are taken care of, from the hospital to our child development center employees. All the contractors, including guards; police, and all those that are keeping this installation operational. I'm so very proud of the resilient workforce, mission partners and community. This is truly an all-together effort.

We are going to enforce **face covering** use in all areas where social distancing cannot take place. Specifically, those areas are the commissary, the Post Exchange, post offices, ID card offices, Child Development Centers, the hospital and food areas. My number one priority is maintaining a safe environment on the installation, which aligns with the DoD policy. I ask each of you do your part, to support a safe and healthy environment for all.

Again, the face coverings aren't necessarily to protect yourself. The face coverings are really to protect the community at large. We've announced the policy many times and have put signs up at the affected facilities and at the gates. So, please don't get your feelings hurt, if you're not helped at an area that requires a face covering.

Cashiers and employees at each of those facilities have been instructed that if you do not have a face covering that they will not sell whatever products or services they are providing for you. The only exception is if you're entering a facility to buy a face covering.

We will have **leadership going out** to make sure that **policy is enforced**. I ask if you see something, say something. If you're one of those who don't want to put a face covering on, I ask you to remain at your house or remain off the installation. The policy is to ensure our residents and our community are protected.

We have reopened our **child development center** but only to **mission essential** personnel. We have added additional protective measures for the children and staff. Children 3 and older are required to wear face coverings in CDCs. And, all proper procedures are in place. We continue to have the public health assessments done at the child development centers, and the hospital ensures we continue to enforce what the standards are, weekly.

In the 500 area, the garrison has established an area we've leveraged the IHG facility to **support housing of quarantine** and isolated occupants, in direct coordination and partnership with the hospital.

This is not a hospital facility and we are not treating patients in that facility. They aren't getting treated there and choices aren't made haphazardly. People in these facilities are going to a COVID clinic and being screened from the hospital, and could be in a high risk home, barracks or don't have access to an unshared bathroom. It's no different than if you are a positive COVID or you're in a partner quarantine situation and you go back to your house, and you stay in your in your bedroom and your bathroom.

#### **Can I walk or drive past the facilities?**

Absolutely yes. And again, there is no health safety issues with walking past those facilities. We have blocked off with some fencing, mostly so children would not get into the facilities. Those occupants of the facilities have military management and security support. We basically sustain their needs while they're in a restriction of movement. Those occupants are not coming out and are not going off the site, until they're released to go back home.

MDW has positioned some **aircraft on the parade field**. Thank you for avoiding the area, as it's not for public display. For safety precautions, remain at least 100 feet away from the areas that the aircraft are.

**Capt. Judy:** I want to start by saying 'thank you.' There are a lot of people in groups doing things for others, whether it's sewing, face covering, or going grocery shopping or watching someone's child so

they can get health care. The community is really, really doing a lot to support one another through this.

Specifically for the hospital. I want to thank the USO, the Red Cross, and the Fort Belvoir community neighborhoods. They've donated face coverings for staff, patients and visitors, as well as meals and snacks for our healthcare workers.

I'd now like to bring up Maj. Green, our chief of the medical readiness department.

**Maj. Green:** Thank you Capt. Judy. **All assessments** are 100% virtually done right now. Complete the self-assessment like normal online, and then call **571-231-7334, option two**, which will take you to the front desk and you can schedule your appointment. Right now, it's a great opportunity to get this done virtually.

Regarding **separation history and physical examinations**. If these cannot be delayed, we are still completing them. However in accordance with HQDA guidance, we're not doing the physical exam portion. So, the hands-on portion are being done virtually as well. The joint medical readiness center, for National Guard and Reserves that have been on orders for 180 days, will be done virtually, and primary care will do your retirement physical also virtually. Pre- and post-deployment health assessments are conducted as usual.

The **Navy's suitability overseas screening** for deployment and **school exams** are being done on a case by case basis. And you can call, again, the joint medical readiness center. It's **571-231-7334, option two**, to talk with the front desk to talk about your specific situation.

**Vision exams** have been **postponed** until further notice unless it's to complete a mission essential exam. If you can postpone your **hearing exam**, we recommend you do that right now.

**Initial flight physicals** will be **delayed** until further notice unless it's for a deployment of mobilization or for school. Some flight services are being offered virtually. If you're in your window to recertify your flight physical or you have questions or concerns, contact the flight team in the Joint Medical Readiness Center.

For **Navy and Marines** there's been a **four month grace period** for physicals such as flight, dive, Naval Special Warfare, Special Operations, submarine status. There's a 4-month grace period, through June 2020, from the time of your current exam.

The medical readiness center is heavily relying on **secure messaging**. If you aren't already enrolled, we highly encourage you to go to track your online and enroll in secure messaging. We're using secure

messaging to make sure that you understand the requirements for the exams before you come in. Some of these exams are very in depth and we want to make sure that when you come in that the exam will be completed. Again, if you have questions, the **joint medical readiness center** number is **571-231-7334, option two**.

**Capt. Judy:** It's actually a really great time to get some of your readiness stuff done. Adding **virtual appointments** has really helped us get our readiness numbers up throughout the base. If you are somebody who has teleworking or you have a little bit of extra time in your day, it's the perfect time to really address some of those readiness healthcare needs.

**Face coverings are required at the hospital**, too, but we're not going to turn patients away. We'll provide a mask, but I'm asking people be mindful, and I don't want the hospital to become the primary source of masks for people when they don't have a face covering. I need those masks for our healthcare workers. Please do your best to come up with an option for getting a face covering prior to coming to the hospital. Belvoir Community Hospital is providing PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) for all their employees and doesn't have a shortage, to safely care for our patients and to protect our staff. We're closely monitoring the utilization rates of key items, which varies depending on the number of patients we have at any given time. We're really closely monitoring gloves, masks, gowns, and the face shields that you see a lot of posts on social media about just across the nation. One of the great benefits of being part of a healthcare network though, is that when we experienced delays and receiving orders specifically for Fort Belvoir, we can cross level or share stock with other facilities in the National Capital Region. We've done that some between the Pentagon, Walter Reed, Fort Belvoir, Quantico, and some of those places. We're doing ok.

I want patients to know that they can come safely to the hospital to get their care and the staff to know that we have plenty to make sure that they're protected as well.

**Are retirees and family members still going to be treated the hospital?** Absolutely yes, we are not turning away or limiting services to any beneficiary group. At this time, we remain committed to serving all of our beneficiaries. The only time that we would not provide care for you is if, for some reason, it exceeded our scope or the capacity of the hospital at that time. What we would do is, we would transfer you, for example, to Walter Reed, a local military tertiary care facility, or to one of the local network hospitals, whichever is safer for that patient to go to at that time.

**Are labor and delivery patients restricted from walking during active labor?** If you're clinically stable to be up during labor, you can walk around your room, you're limited to your room. The rooms are fairly big in size and so you can walk around the room, but not in the passageways (hallways), like before. This is for everyone's protection, the patient, their significant other, and the staff. There was a **comment that it's unreasonable to expect laboring patients to wear a mask while in labor**. The mask

is necessary to protect patients and staff when both are in the room. But, when the staff member leaves the room, you can remove that mask and continue to labor without that mask. It's only required when everyone is in the room together.

**Are there plans for a drive up pharmacy? A drive-up pharmacy service starts tomorrow (Friday, April 17), with instructions and a graphic on the Facebook page for Fort Belvoir Community Hospital and on the web page.** It has all of the information on how you can activate your prescription, and then what you need to do to utilize that curbside pharmacy service. **The hours will be from 0730 to 1730, Monday through Friday. It will not be open on Saturday,** because, generally, the volume on Saturdays doesn't really support having it open and we can safely continue to social distance and have people come in on Saturdays to the pharmacy. The entire pharmacy team has been working really hard over the last few weeks to make this experience as seamless as possible. Please still wear your face covering when you drive up to meet the staff and to receive your prescriptions. There are **two ways that you can do curbside pharmacy.** If you don't activate your prescription in advance, then it takes two trips, right one to come up and do that activation at the curb and then another return visit later on to pick up those prescriptions. If you activate that prescription prior to coming in, then it will be ready for your pick up when you come later and it will only be one trip to get those prescriptions. If you have any questions or you want the phone number to activate that prescription. It's the same phone number. I think that Maj. Green was just giving out. It's the hospital main number **571-231-3224. And that will be option two, and then option two.** So the first option two is for pharmacy. The second option two is to go through the process of activating those prescriptions.

**COL Greenberg:** For the face coverings, again, **make sure that you aren't incorrectly covering just your mouth and not your nose.** I've done some battlefield circulations around the installation. About 80-90% of our folks are already wearing face coverings, but unfortunately, some of them are just having it on their mouth and not their nose. So please make sure you're wearing those correctly.

**How safe are the commissary's passive thermal temperature readers?** First, I want to dispel any rumors...those are not cameras. Those are **passive thermal temperature readers** with no memory cards. Those devices are looking at the core of your eyes and giving a core temperature. If you do have a higher temperature with that thermal reader, we also have the IR non-touch, contact thermometers at the commissary and will take your temperature with a secondary measure. If you still have a high temperature, we're going to recommend that you go seek medical advice from the hospital.

We also have set up a **single point of entry into the main Exchange** facilities. So if you are trying to go to go to the Exchange pharmacy or the food court, you do need to **enter through the main Exchange doors.** We do have screeners there. They're asking questions. They're also going to make sure people

understand the face covering policy.

**What I demand from you** is that you **do not take any anxieties out on any of the screeners**. Don't tell the screeners anything bad. It's not them, **it's myself who's put out the policy letter**. They are just advising you on what that policy is. If you have challenges with that, you could come talk to me and my staff. Also the facility managers are out there enforcing the standards as well. You can talk to one of them if you have challenges. Please do not take out your frustrations on the security guards at the front. Those screeners at the two facilities are doing their jobs and they're taking orders.

I'd now like Mr. Hentschel from DES (Directorate of Emergency Services) to come up and answer a questions concerning his area.

**Mr. Hentschel:** Thank you, sir. With the DMV being closed, the Department of Homeland Security has announced a further extension of the **REAL ID requirements**. Homeland Security has extended the REAL ID requirement to 1 October 2021. However, if you've renewed your driver's license recently, and you did not opt for that REAL ID compliant driver's license, the one that, if you got one, says **not for Federal use** on it, we are still unable to accept this as a sole form of identification. So you'd need a secondary form of identification also, like a birth certificate or passport.

**COL Greenberg:** Thank you. Now, I'd like Mr. Rennick from DHR (Directorate of Human Resources) to come to the podium and answer questions concerning his area.

**Mr. Rennick:** Question, for retiree dependents that are turning 65 in June and don't receive the Medicare card on time because social security offices have been closed and everything is taking longer, **what is going to happen with our ID and TRICARE?** The latest policy issued is that all ID cards issued on or before 1 January 2020, will be extended through 30 September 2020. So, your ID card will not expire. As it pertains to the Medicare card, try to reach the Social Security Administration office and speak with an individual there, because they are able to process your application on the telephone. **Social Security's phone number is 1-800-772-1213.**

**COL Greenberg:** Thank you, Mr. Rennick. We have another question concerning **uniform hours at commissary. Can we have some timeframes, where we have certain categories come to the commissary? There is not going to be a uniform or retiree portion**, or a high risk shopping portion at the commissary. We have 1500 people to 3000 patrons going through the commissary each day. Try altering your shopping times, instead of everyone going in the morning, try the afternoon or evening. **The commissary continues to have trucks come.** There is a whole lot of inventory there. Some of the items they are still having some challenges with include toilet paper, but most things are in pretty good

supply. But again the misnomer is that, if I miss the morning shopping the shelves will be empty. That is that is a false pretense.

The next question is, **if we are trying to limit people contact, should baggers at the commissary be considered non-essential?** I would tell you the commissary has a very good logistical setup for operations. The baggers are just like any other part of the commissary to make the commissary run effectively. There are not as many baggers there as there are normally. They do have a reduced staffing of baggers. **They are essential** to getting 1500 customers in and out, with more on the weekends, each day. It takes every part of the commissary to operate. If you're concerned with the baggers, you have options to do a self-checkout area or to go to the cashier that does not have a bagger.

Now I'd like to bring up Mr. Landgraf, acting director of Public Works to answer questions concerning his area.

**Mr. Landgraf:** Thank you, sir. **Is our maintenance personnel wearing protective gear? Yes, they are.** I've confirmed with both our housing partner and with our base ops contractor that they are issuing personal protective gear for the maintenance technicians, and they are wearing face coverings and gloves when they go into facilities.

**COL Greenberg:** Thank you. Our next question is, **what about Soldiers' haircuts? If the PX barbers can take proper cleaning precautions, can we open the barber shop for limited hours to military personnel only?** We've already done public health assessments. Thank you, hospital, for providing a lot of the measures that we will implement when we do open the barber shop back up. That is under consideration. However, **at this time, it will not open for several weeks.** Again, I'm not going to give any timelines at this point. When we open, we will open to active military first, with limited hours using all the cautionary measures that were outlined by the hospital and then open it up to the public as the situation continues on.

**Has a curbside pickup service started at Fort Belvoir?**

**Yes, it has.** Go online and order. Signs for the service have changed around the Commissary's Click2Go area. Also, the **Exchange is working to open a personal shopper program.** Again, more details will be on the website. This program is really set up for those who are in isolation and quarantine, who can't go to a pick up some of the items that you need. More to follow later.

Now I'd like to bring up Mr. Dickson, director of Family, and Morale, Welfare and Recreation, to answer questions concerning his area.

**Mr. Dickson:** The first question concerned the Child Development Centers. Yes, we are currently doing temperature checks at the CDCs.

The next question is, **we have plans to go camping in June. Has anything been decided that far out yet? As of now, we have not cancelled any reservations in June.** We have canceled all reservations through May.

The final question is, **can I take my boat on the Potomac? It's at the Marina on post.** Yes, the launch ramp is open as long as you have your keycard to get into the gate, you're good to go.

**COL Greenberg:** I have a few additional questions. **Should fast food employees be wearing masks and gloves? Yes,** they should and they are wearing them. Face coverings and gloves will be worn. The food employees also must maintain washing their hands. So, you may see gloves off for washing of hands. When they are preparing food, they are wearing all prescribed PPE. However, **if you see something, say something.**

**Will refunds for spring sports be issued? Yes.** If there are refund questions about anything that you have booked, whether it's the Officers' Club, golf, spring sports, whatever those are, **we will offer full refunds** for any of those activities.

**Is the CYS services only for mission essential children? Yes.** Actually we really call them vital, vital families, because, again, the child development center operations is one of our more risky operations, we've done a lot to protect the children and our employees out there. We've been asked by our mission partners to reverse decisions and stand things back up. So as we move to a decreased health protection condition that would trigger some of these activities like the Child Development Center, haircuts, bowling, golf course...all those activities that we have been doing that will trigger those to begin to stand up with all those protective measures that we put into place

Capt. Judy, do you have another question?

**Capt. Judy:** Yes I do. **Is the hospital vaccine clinic still open? Sort of.** We are still giving vaccines, which kind of goes hand in hand with providers and virtual appointments. **For children** who are on those schedules for vaccinations, **we want to maintain those** schedules to the best of our ability to make



sure that they get those. But with regards to the appointments, we are still doing quite a bit of in-person care at the hospital. It's typically acute, urgent or emergency care, or care that can't be deferred or care that can't be accomplished by telemedicine. So yes, the vaccine services are reduced from what they used to be, but they're still in vaccine services to support all of the care that's being delivered there.

**COL Greenberg:** Thanks Capt. Judy. Mr. Rennick, we have another question for you.

**Mr. Rennick:** Yes sir. The question is, **is the finance office still open?** Yes. We are prioritizing our orders based on record dates. We are working in concert with mission partners and the HR community as it pertains to the issuance of those for Service members and Soldiers.

**COL Greenberg:** That's about all of our time for today. Capt. Judy, do you have any closing remarks?

**Capt. Judy:** Yes. I want to say I appreciate the respectful nature in which everybody treats one another. And the fact that we've got people who are answering questions for others when they know they've seen that someplace else. I'm really impressed with this community and appreciative of everyone taking the time to do that.

**COL Greenberg:** Thank you. I would just like to remind everyone, **if information does not come from a credible source, I asked you to please keep your comments to yourself**, because you cause other folks to panic when there's no need to panic. My number one priority during this health emergency is really to **protect the community**. We will continue to keep you updated on everything that we're doing to beat this virus. We will be out in force tomorrow making sure that the community is truly using face coverings in all areas. Thank you for listening and we look forward to the next update. Remember social distance and saves lives and we're all in this together. The longer we stay at home and apart the sooner we'll be together. Thank you again and have a great night.