

Fort Belvoir Facebook COVID-19 Virtual Town hall Q&A Recap

May 7, 2020

*This is not a verbatim transcript. Questions and answers may be edited for clarity.

Participants:

- COL Michael Greenberg, Fort Belvoir Garrison Commander
- CAPT Cynthia Judy, Director, Fort Belvoir Community Hospital
- Mr. George Dickson, Director, Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation
- Mr. Frank Hentschel, Director, Emergency Services
- Mr. Chris Landgraf, Acting Director, Public Works
- Mr. Kevin Rennick, Director, Human Resources

Question: When will elective surgery return?

CAPT Cynthia Judy: At the hospital, what we were doing, though, was we were we were doing urgent, emergent and time sensitive surgeries where if a patient had to wait throughout this pandemic, that could have jeopardize their health further. As this pandemic began, we had a number of patients who didn't fall into that category, so we had to defer their surgery until another time. What we've done is we've taken that list of patients and the surgeons have prioritized them based on their acuity or their severity. They've already begun reaching out to some of those patients so that they can start scheduling their surgeries, some of that is going to happen as early as next week. We're going to balance that backlog of cases that were deferred, with any new cases coming in to make sure that we're seeing, seeing patients as quickly as possible and as safely as possible.

Question: When will the parking garage open up?

CAPT Cynthia Judy: Right now, the parking remains in the front of the hospital, we don't have a plan yet to open the garage. We will continue to monitor parking and then open the garage as necessary.

Question: What is the status of Army fee assistance program?

COL Michael Greenberg: The Army Fee Assistance Program is an alternative for families unable to access child care on the installation. The Fort Belvoir Child Development Centers are not going to go up to full capacity, even in the next couple months. We've already sent a note out to parents indicating that we will have limitations with the social distancing rules, our capacities will be cut significantly.

Question: When is the playground opening up? When will the outdoor activities open up

COL Michael Greenberg: We don't have a date for opening up the playground and other outdoor activities. But what we're doing now is we're working closely with the hospital, who's working closely with the CDC guidelines with the state and local officials to figure out what the standards are to maintain those outdoor activities. The number one priority is the safety of our Fort Belvoir community.

Question: Can staff still pick up refills at Fort Belvoir community hospital? Are they required to use the drive thru?

CAPT Cynthia Judy: And the answer is that they're still at the step processes. The process is the same. If they activate their prescription in advance, staff can still pick it up in house at the window since they're already in the building.

Question: What's being done to crack down on people running food businesses out of their homes, especially since we are in the middle of a pandemic?

COL Michael Greenberg: No one should not be running a food business out of their one installation home, unless it's authorized. We are not aware of any home-based business authorized to serve food. If you see something, say something. If that doesn't work, please report that to Department of Emergency Services non-emergency number, or the garrison public affairs and we will get it in the right channels. We'll make sure we enforce the regulation rules that we have on the installation.

Question: Are you providing your soldiers with PPE?

COL Michael Greenberg: There face coverings coming in. We were fortunate the services reported there was a large donor for face coverings, we have a whole lot coming in the plan right now is to issue out to face coverings, purse, stolen soldier and then looking at service members as well.

Question: The White House is currently having a briefing and discuss ways of the transmission of the virus is impeded with white house discussions like this and opening up outdoor activities. What is the plan for basketball courts, skate park, and the playgrounds on the post as the weather warms up?

COL Michael Greenberg: We are not going to make time-based decisions. The decision to open services will be condition-based. The Garrison works with a public health emergency officer to assist with planning and taking precautionary measures. It is important to remember, the public health emergency still exists and we are still in an elevated Health Protection Condition. The weather will not be a factor in reopening some of the outdoor facilities. White House guidance and state guidance are both reviewed in installation planning.

Question: Is Fort Belvoir Community Hospital going to start using zoom for patient care?

CAPT Cynthia Judy: We can't use zoom on a Defense Department computer, but we're using other programs. And we're doing the same thing that zoom does with patients. And so I think the new normal for us, it's going to be that you're going to see some opportunities to get care at the hospital in a different manner.

Question: What is the installation doing about block parties in the Villages?

COL Michael Greenberg: Safety is the priority. If you're thinking about a block party, just remember your cross pollinating food, you're also going to not maintain social distancing. I'm asking the community to be smart. You could be asymptomatic, and don't know that you have the virus. Please use common sense as we go forward.

Question: Can visitor passes be extended?

Mr. Frank Hentschel: Fort Belvoir visitor passes have been extended for an additional 30 days until June 15.

Question: What is the point of scanning one person's ID card at the gate guard is only going to stop you and scan the passengers? The guard will make you go into reverse to scan your card, but then pull forward again.

Mr. Frank Hentschel: The current Fort Belvoir force protection condition does not allow for the trusted traveler program. The trusted traveler program allows for one person in the vehicle to be the sponsor for all the vehicle occupants. The current system at the gate is designed for one person for one vehicle, so the guard must then scan the remainder of the passengers.

Question: Is there a chance that guards can get hazard pay?

Mr. Frank Hentschel: I had the resource management office review this and the current OPM guidance. The current situation does not merit hazard pay for guard force,

Question: Some employees in one of the restaurants were not wearing face coverings,

COL. Michael Greenberg: I have discussed this with the restaurant staff. If this happens, please continue to reach out to my staff or to me. You can submit an ICE complaint.

Question: Do we have qualifications for a temporary authorization for civilian shopping at the PX and Commissary?

COL Greenberg: There is no authorization right now for civilians to shop at the Commissary or PX. There could be other things going on other installations. However, at Fort Belvoir, a temporary authorization is not allowed for civilians to shop at the Fort Belvoir Exchange or Commissary.

Question: Any information about changes in the preschool, I pre-k kids schedules or routines would be great to hear about ahead of time, so parents can prepare them with new normal things like wearing mask or not touching other friends, etc.

Mr. George Dickson: Yes, CYS will provide families with schedules and routines via Sims, email, and Facebook notifications to assist with transition back into the programs.

Question: When is Walker gate opening? Is it on timeline?

COL Michael Greenberg: We are looking at the September, October time frame. But again, we are we're still working through the permit process, which is at its final stages.

Question: Will CYS provide statements of non-availability online or in person for children that will be removed from childcare due to low priority on base childcare. When will we know that we are no longer a priority and are ineligible to reason childcare? Will that notice come with the statement about availability or is it needed for the childcare aware?

Mr. George Dickson: Families unable to receive child care on Fort Belvoir must go through Childcare Aware of America for Army Fee Assistance. They will create an account and find a provider. The statement of non-availability will come from Childcare Aware America. Army COI assigns a letter verifying that childcare is not available within 30 days as needed.

I just wanted to add a little bit more information about FCC homes on Fort Belvoir that has to do with unauthorized homes providing daycare on the installation. Army policy requires that anyone providing care on a regular basis for more than 10 hours per week must be served by through Child and Youth Services as an FCC provider. Providing unauthorized childcare in government owned leased housing puts you at risk of losing your housing privileges. Unauthorized childcare by uncertified person puts your child at risk.

Question: Does Fort Belvoir have virtual in and out processing?

Mr. Kevin Rennick: Yes, all in and out processing is done virtually. Consult with your unit S1, G-1 or organization administrator. They are working in concert with all personnel within the Military Personnel Division and can assist all Soldiers with the internal processing procedures.

Question: Will Fort Belvoir install reflective road markers on the main driveways are the thoroughfares Belvoir and Gunston Roads?

Mr. Chris Landgraf: The answer is no. Unfortunately, the reflective road markers don't last as long as we would like them to. However, we are tracking this issue and we are working to restripe the roads with the highly reflective centerline marking, inside line markings that VDOT uses to improve visibility.