

April 2 Fort Belvoir Garrison Virtual COVID-19 Town Hall Recap

This recap was prepared on April 2. Because information changes frequently, this recap should not be used to make decisions regarding installation access, facility services, hours of operations, security requirements, hospital information, etc. For the latest information you are encouraged to visit the Fort Belvoir website and Facebook page.

COL GREENBERG - I'm Colonel Michael Greenberg the Fort Belvoir Garrison Commander. Thanks for listening in on this on this town hall, as Captain Cindy Judy is next to me, the director at the Fort Belvoir Community Hospital. I want to update you on our situation and address questions and concerns that you may have on COVID-19. I also want to update you on the efforts to protect the health of our team, our service members, civilians, retirees, and family members at Fort Belvoir. We're in uncharted territories and working rapidly in this changing environment. We continue to do these virtual town halls weekly, to make sure you're updated on the current day to day operations and what we're doing to ensure safety across the installation. We encourage all personnel to follow the guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Policies issued by this garrison.

I've asked our public affairs office to continue to work with our mission partners and our community across the board to provide the latest updates on our Facebook sites, and our Worldwide Web.

I want to ensure we continue to provide clear consistent persistent fact based communications, leveraging our social media, newspaper and our virtual town halls.

(Edited for clarity) The major update from last week is that we increased to HPCON Charlie. The closed captioned video of the town hall was posted to our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/fortbelvoir. Just click the video tab where you can find all of the virtual town halls. This information can also be found on our website at home.army.mil/belvoir.

The curfew I issued last week for unaccompanied minors, age 17 and under, is still in effect from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. We asked our parents and our guardians for their continued support in ensuring that their children adhere to the curfew for the safety and wellbeing of our Belvoir community. I ask that everyone enforces what we're putting out for social distancing, to include the curfew. If you see something, say something. If you see something that is not within the guidelines, please say something to the parent or to the children.

Right now, Tulley, J.J. Kingman and Telegraph gates will remain closed. The only gates that are open for access right now are Lieber, Pence and Farrar. I ask that you honor the gates being in a "No Salute Zone" until further notice. There's been some issues that have come up to me in the last couple of days from service members who want the gate guards to salute them as they come in. Please understand, we're very traditional here. But at this point, I asked for your patience and understanding, as we make this a "No Salute Zone" because the personal protective equipment make it difficult to see ranks on the ID Cards.

Essential services such as the Exchange and Commissary, regardless of the Health Protection Level, will remain open. I encourage each of you to check the websites and social media sites of the Exchange and Commissary for updated hours. For the Commissary, we have been doing a lot of monitoring and also trying to prevent too many people from being in the store. I ask that you try to limit the number of family members that you bring to the Commissary and try to avoid going during busy times, such as the mornings. Instead, try different times in a day or have one individual from the family go to the commissary and have other family members virtually shop online.

Playgrounds and outdoor gathering areas such as picnic areas, skate parks, outdoor archery and dog parks are all closed.

Many of our mission partners have already taken measures to reduce their employee footprints by using telework and other alternative work schedules. Many of our garrison staff are also working at alternative work locations and work schedules, and agencies are doing enhance screenings at their work areas.

I want to just take a minute to talk about a case that happened last night and dispel any rumors and be transparent. My goal is just to give you the rationale behind last night's decision to close our Child Development Center. This was a deliberate decision triggered by an unfortunate event. We took swift actions to make sure that we protected our employees, our children the community. Yesterday I received a call from the Child and Youth Services informing me that we had a positive test of COVID-19 in the CDC with one of the workers. We immediately closed the CDC when we received the results yesterday.

The individual felt sick and had symptoms last Friday and got tested on Saturday. The employee was self-isolated or quarantined. The employee did not go to work this week. When we received the results yesterday, we worked with the hospital, and the hospital worked with the county to make sure that trace was done immediately. We did an unofficial trace yesterday to get out the notices and information to those who potentially could be affected by the positive case. Out of abundance of care, I decided it was in the best interest of our children and the caregivers to close the CDC until April 13th. Before we open back up on the 13th of April, we will be a very well postured for that event.

I appreciate the hospital and the county working hard to get the traces done and to do everything we need to do to put that information out to the community. Additionally, there were concerns that our CDCs were not safe. Another action that we took was having a Public Health Assessment conducted. We did a full report on our Child Development Centers, as we have done periodically, to include this week. These precautionary measures are being done in conjunction with our hospital.

I also directed a Public Health Assessment across the installation at all AAFES concessionaires. This actually was done on Monday. The hospital nurses conducted the assessments across the installation at places such as our shoppettes, food establishments and Commissary, places are highly trafficked. All of those areas did pass the assessments. I thank the Commissary and AAFES for their continued support and the measures taken to protect the community.

I also want to talk about details of COVID-19 positive individuals and disclosing of information or not disclosing of information. You have a right to know if you or your children have been exposed from COVID-19. I have an obligation to inform you of that in the most effective and timely manner; and

likewise the hospital has the same obligation. So this is exactly what we do. At the same time, we're obligated and legally bound to safeguard an individual's personal identification information and personal health information. This is why we do not disclose those details in open forums and we protect those individuals' rights. So I thank you for your continued patience and adherence to these health and safety protocols.

Many of you may have read about some restrictive measures that have been adopted in other installations. We remain in our current posture of Health Protection Charlie and we will announce any changes or additional measures if it becomes available to elevate to the Health Protection posture. Although our HPCON level has not changed, I ask that if you do not have to be on Fort Belvoir, I encourage you to forego unless it's for essential items such as food, medicine, medical appointments or mission essential work. Whether we are in HPCON Charlie, or we elevate to HPCON Delta, that we will not close this installation.

Last week I published a policy instructing residents to self-quarantine, that's basically to report. If they're self-quarantine, isolated, or conditionally released. That applies to all residents at the Villages of Belvoir, those living in the barracks, and those individuals temporarily occupying our IHG lodging facilities.

I asked you to continue to self-report to my operation center. That is for government use only and that information will not be disclosed on any open forums. In fact, we do not even ask for names for that self-report, that information is for first responders and for those who have to go in if there's an emergency. We do not share addresses with our with our maintenance teams. We provide the maintenance team with a street and if any of the work orders are on that street, they call our operation center and make sure that their employees are protected. We will verify that a house is or is not a quarantine house. This is what the data is being used for.

One of the recurring questions we and the hospital receives is, "what is the number of Fort Belvoir employees or residents testing positive for COVID-19?" I understand that our Fort Belvoir community have questions and concerns, and we're doing all we can to address those quickly, while also maintaining confidentiality and operational security as necessary.

The garrison will not release numbers of positive tests, nor will the hospital. We will take all appropriate public health measures to care for infected and identify and quarantine those who may have been in contact with infected individuals. We will continue to communicate with the community to ensure you're aware of public health conditions on the installation, in our local area, and in the world and make you aware of guidance from local authorities and military leaders. However, we will not provide to you in aggregate number of total positive tests on the installation.

Finally, before we go to some questions and answers, I will share with you some sad news. On Tuesday, a Defense Logistics Agency employee, who worked on Fort Belvoir, did pass away. They tested positive for COVID-19 and had been under medical treatment at a local hospital. Prior to the employee's positive test, the employee had been isolated from the workforce for more than 14 days while teleworking. My condolences go out to the employee's family and coworkers. I ask that you keep them in your prayers.

I appreciate all the feedback that you have given us on or our Facebook Town Hall poll.

QUESTION - Is there a possibility going to Health Protection Delta and what would what would be the restrictive measures?

COL GREENBERG - It possible to go to HPCON Delta. I'm not saying it's likely but it is possible. It is based off of the conditions on the ground. The decision maker is the Military District of Washington Commander, Major General Jones. Until he declares an elevated level, we will remain at HPCON Charlie. We're not elevating HPCON levels at this point. The other question was, what will the restrictions be? I will tell you what HPCON Delta is not. HPCON Delta is not closing down Fort Belvoir. It would not stop all central work orders and contractors coming on to post to do their work. It will not close down Grab & Go at the restaurants, the gas stations, AAFES and the Commissary. Those will not close. What potentially could happen is we may limit Access Control Point (number of gates). So instead of having three access control points (gates) open, we could potentially go down to two access control points (gates). But again, to be clear, it's not closing down the installation. We could potentially enhance screening at the gates, which means asking questions and potentially taking temperature readings.

QUESTION – What are the guidelines and procedures to follow in case a person wants to get tested for COVID-19 at Fort Belvoir Community Hospital?

CAPT JUDY – Many of you are aware but I just want to share with you, that we've implemented drive up screening and testing. That happened about two weeks ago and it's located by the emergency room entrance in the back. Patients who present at the drive up are asked a series of questions regarding their medical history, their symptoms, their travel or their exposure history. If they meet criteria, they can safely be tested outside. Then we'll collect that sample, while they're outside. However, those that require further medical evaluation or treatment can be assessed inside. We can do that either in the COVID clinic, the emergency department or one of our clinics based on what their clinical presentation is. We don't want to jeopardize anybody's healthcare by doing that outside so if they require further treatment or evaluation, we want them to come into the hospital through the emergency department parking area and we'll take them into where they can be evaluated further.

QUESTION - Is the commentary Click2Go service available? How fast does it fill up? Why is the commissary not stocked throughout the day?

COL GREENBERG - Yes Click2Go is available and it fills up within hours. The way the Click2Go service works is there's normally about 50 - 57 orders that are processed daily. The commissary has just increased the amount and now they can process about 77 online orders a day. The ordering process is a 6 day process. So, when the next six days are filled up, it resets every day. I recommend utilizing that option because it is a great way not to have to shop in the commissary. The other question is, why are they not stocked throughout the day? The commissary is stocked throughout the day. In some cases for certain items, the Commissary is having challenges with the distributor to fill orders and therefore, will not have them on the shelves. We are having stockers fill the Commissary shelves during the day and night to make sure that those shelves are stocked. The items that are hard to find on the shelves are being rationed off. The rationing numbers are coming from me to allow for people who shop in the mornings, afternoons and evenings, an opportunity to buy those items too.

QUESTION - How severe is the COVID-19 effected rate here on Fort Belvoir?

CAPT JUDY - I want to share as much as possible with the community on this topic, even though we can't report those numbers. So Fort Belvoir is in Fairfax County and you can go onto their website and see what their numbers are for Fairfax County. We took a look at the age distribution of those cases and then we compare our rates with those. What we're seeing is very similar to what they're seeing in their numbers. The largest percentage of cases are among the 18 to 49 year old population and in the 50 to 64 year old population right now. That's likely due to the volume of folks being tested within those age ranges as well. The majority of our beneficiary population is in Virginia, Maryland or DC, and we work closely with all of the county and state public health departments for reporting and completion of contact investigations. So while we can't speak to those numbers, those are great resources for people if they're concerned. If you look at what's going on in New York City right now and you want to know how Fort Belvoir is doing in comparison to that, those are really great resources for people to go and find that information.

QUESTION – What changes would be implemented at HPCON Delta for the gates and Exchange hours? Are there any plans to close the exchange or limit access?

COL GREENBERG - There is no change to access control at this point, we still have three gates open (Lieber, Pence and Farrar). Our commercial and visitor gate is at Lieber Gate. If we were to increase Health Protection Level, we could potentially go down to 2 gates as opposed to 3. We could also potentially have enhanced screening at the gates. The other question is, are there changes to the exchange hours and any plans to close the exchange or limit access? There are changes to hours that are coming from AAFES daily. I ask you to continue to keep yourself updated on our Facebook and our website. We do keep those updated. I appreciate AAFES continuing the communication with us. AAFES provides us updates and we provide that to the community at large. If you are a beneficiary and you have access to the Commissary or Exchange, you will continue to have access to those facilities, regardless of what HPCON Level we are at. HPCON Delta does not limit beneficiary's access to AAFES or the Commissary.

QUESTION - Where are infected soldiers and civilians being held?

CAPT JUDY – Soldiers and civilians are not being held but military members and civilians in the Fort Belvoir community are placed in quarantine or isolation typically in their homes, according to CDC and state health department guidelines. We've worked closely with the installation to secure some temporary lodging when someone's living arrangement isn't optimal for safe quarantine or isolation. Examples of that might be too many roommates or maybe there's somebody in the household that has some sort of medical condition that would put them at risk. We work closely with the base to protect those people. The other place that we have people in an isolation would be in the hospital, if somebody requires admission. They could also get transferred to a local civilian facility or to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, depending on what that acuity is.

QUESTION – Are there any updates to the Child Development Center closures, refunds at work, workforce changes?

COL GREENBERG - As mentioned before, we did close a CDC effective last night. It will reopen on April 13, location to be determined. If you have questions about refunds and workforce changes, please work directly with CYS and their leadership. You will get refunded for anything that is not used. For workforce changes, please work with the CYS leadership on that as well.

QUESTION - If a child tests positive for COVID-19, will a parent be able to stay with them if they're hospitalized?

CAPT JUDY - At this time, our visitation policy will allow for a parent to stay with their hospitalized child. Of course we're going to work with families on a case by case basis to ensure that the safety of both that child and that parent, so if there's some reason that the parent maybe there shouldn't be in that room, we will allow another family member or somebody to be with them. We want to make sure that our patients are all protected.

QUESTION – Are there any updates to ID card renewal and can ID cards beyond 90 days be renewed?

COL GREENBERG - The Army is not extending ID card renewals. The Army and DoD are working with TRICARE because the issue is, if you do not extend your military IDs and your benefits expire, there will be issues when you try to get those benefits on the outside with childcare. That is one of the main reasons why we are where we are right now. Can ID cards be beyond 90 days to be renewed? At this point, no. If there's an emergency, please work with our ID card section, but again we have to prioritize whose ID cards get renewed at what time. I ask that you have patience and consideration across the installation, as, as we go through this process. I will also reassess the Visitor Passes guidance here in several day. I may extend them an additional 30 days. My intent is to limit many people in one area, so I will potentially extend passes for a longer time.

QUESTION – What precautions, if any, is the hospital taking to maintain medication supply, not only for COVID but for routine need? Do they have hydroxychloroquine?

CAPT JUDY - The pharmacy currently has sufficient supply of most of our medications, as well as the COVID-19 related medications. Where we anticipate shortages, we limit dispensing to 30 day supplies, until that delayed shipment arrives. An example of that is inhalers. Right now, certain inhalers are on critical backorder, so we'll give one inhaler at a time as opposed to multiple inhalers so that we can ensure that everyone who needs one, gets one. We also work closely with the National Capital Region to cross level or share our resources. It's one of the great benefits of being part of this region here with so many military treatment facilities in the area.

QUESTION – If installation access is closed, does this apply to River and Woodlawn villages?

COL GREENBERG - The installation access will not be closed. So for River and Woodlawn, you would still have access onto the installation.

QUESTION - Will construction contractors, coming from other states, be able to use the exchange food facilities and Exchange?

COL GREENBERG - The answer is yes for the Exchange food facilities. If they're an authorized user at the Exchange, then yes as well.

QUESTION – Why are the screening procedures so lax, such as basic questions and no temperature checks? It doesn't seem to be very secure.

CAPT JUDY - I just want to emphasize that we are a hospital and our patients deserve patient centered, compassionate care. The screenings being done in accordance with CDC guidelines. We may add

temperature checks in the future but we're currently not doing them. Our emphasis remains on clinically indicated measures. Despite what some may perceive, the access control points really have limited a bunch of people from coming in the hospital. Our goal really is to protect our patients and our staff without generating a lot of anxiety and fear. We recognize that a lot of people are afraid as they come to the hospital these days. We want to make sure that those access points aren't deterring them from coming in, so compassionate care is important.

COL GREENBERG – This is a reference to our frequently asked questions page on our website. Any questions that that I can't answer at this point or do not have any decision made on, we will place them on our frequent frequently asked questions page on our website. Two questions I cannot answer at this point are, 'Will access to outdoor facilities such as water launch ramp fishing and outdoor areas, be available for families to stay active?' and 'Can golf course trails be used for exercise, walking and running?' For these for these types of decisions, I get my advice straight from the hospital. I have a Public Health Emergency Officer who provides me guidelines on that. I will answer at a later date.

QUESTION - How many ICU beds are at Fort Belvoir, and what's the capacity to expand that if needed?

CAPT JUDY - We're a community hospital and we have 10 ICU beds, normally, but we're part of the National Capital Region. This includes Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and numerous other military treatment facilities. The National Capital Region has an extensive expansion plan to support the pandemic with additional inpatient Ward and critical capabilities. We're also working closely with our local civilian network facilities. So if you've seen pictures even at Walter Reed, they set up 10 hospitals right there and there's been a couple of things that have gone on in our nation for the Navy, the Mercy and the Comfort have deployed to New York and to Los Angeles to do some non COVID care. Some of those similar activities are being planned for the National Capital Region, in the event that the capacity, or the demand, exceeds the capacity. We will continue to reassess but that is a very robust expansion plan that they have so that they can care for our beneficiary population here in the National Capital Region.

QUESTION - Do the office cleaning crews take any additional precautions when cleaning? Are they required to do deep cleaning of workspaces and how frequently?

MR. LANDGRAF (DPW Acting Director) – Yes, the office cleaning crews are taking additional measures, they are putting gloves on and cleaning with gloves, more so than they had in the past. They are wearing a mask if they feel that they need to and they often change clothes between different portions of a building. They are cleaning with EPA approved products. They are not taking any additional measures to deep clean, however, we are working on a contract to get more of a deep cleaning process that is beyond the normal cleaning contract that we have in place.

QUESTION - Are there any changes to the Fort Belvoir Community Hospital visitation policy?

CAPT JUDY - It has not changed since the last Town Hall and that policy is available on our Fort Belvoir Community Hospital Facebook page and on our website. When a patient has a concern about the visitation policy, for example if somebody is admitted to the hospital and they have questions, please ask those questions of their healthcare team that's involved directly in their patient care. There are some opportunities at times to make exceptions based on, on a case by case basis. We do address certain care needs on a case by case basis.

COL GREENBERG – Another question that will be addressed at a later date and put into our frequently asked questions is, ‘Do service members with approved ETS, PCS from overseas have priority for on-post lodging to self-quarantine their families? I think the question is, is there room in the on post lodging for family ETSing and PCSing? Yes, there are rooms available. However, I will get additional answers about this question at a later date. But again, if people need a place to stay, we do have the Staybridge and Holiday Inn on the installation that are available for use.

Another question that will be addressed later is ‘What needs to be done for a family to move from on post housing to off post housing within two weeks?’ That sounds like an individual question. I asked that the individual reach out to either my housing team or to the Michael's team to get that answer directly. If you cannot get an answer then, I will get you an answer.

QUESTION - Is there a hospital hotline or a hospital phone number to call directly to for the COVID testing location are being done?

CAPT JUDY – The number to the COVID Clinic at Fort Belvoir Community Hospital is 571-231-0532.

COL GREENBERG - Before I take another question, I have one more note. Because the Staff Judge Advocate office is currently closed, anyone seeking legal assistance may call legal assistance office at 703-805-2856. Appointments will be conducted telephonically, and the SJA has procedures in place to accommodate most legal matters. If you call in after hours, clients can leave a voicemail and someone will call you back the next business day.

QUESTION – Is the Hospital giving numbers to the CDC?

CAPT JUDY - We report through the Departments of Health and that goes into the CDC numbers.

QUESTION – Does Fort Belvoir Community Hospital have ventilators?

CAPT JUDY - We absolutely have ventilators, yes.

QUESTION – Is it a HIPAA violation for the homes of self-isolating individuals to be identified?

COL GREENBERG - So I think the question is, if we identify someone in the front yard with a sign, is that a HIPAA violation? I will get back to you. I'll have to advise with my SJA.

CAPT JUDY - If were someone were to tell someone that they had a diagnosis, that's not a HIPAA violation. When the patient or the family themselves shares the news of their condition with other people, that is not a HIPPA violation.

COL GREENBERG - If you're going to do it on your own and volunteer that information, it's not a HIPAA violation. However, if you're asking the Garrison to do it, I will get back to you but I believe that is a HIPAA violation for me to force someone to self-regulate on their porch or in their area that they have been self-reported or are in quarantine/isolation.

QUESTION - So why is the commissary still allowing over 100 people to shop at a time and why is social distancing not happening?

COL GREENBERG - I have leaders going in the Commissary and trying to enforce the standards. I ask the community to say something, if the standards not being met. We are limiting access and doing the best we can to limit the number of people in the Commissary. Increased measures have been implemented

such as in the high volume aisles, we've put down tape out on the floor that identifies the six foot spacing requirement between others. The Commissary has also added displays in aisles and checkout lines that allows for a six foot distance between people when passing through. If you see something that's unsafe or you see people that are conjugating, please say something. I also ask that you protect our Commissary workers too. Please, honor their space. We will continue to have the commissary and our leadership enforce those standards, but I also will ask you to enforce those standards, from your end as well.

QUESTION - What is the reason specific buildings have been sanitized but personnel are not notified if an infected person was working in the building?

COL GREENBERG - If there is a positive case on the installation in one of our office buildings, we have set up an individual contract for emergency cleaning that meets all of the CDC guidelines. If there is a self-reported case, the identified areas will be roped off and the emergency cleaning crew will come in and do that cleaning.

CAPT JUDY - For the contact investigation, there's not a specific "notify everyone in the building" kind of scenario. Instead, that contact investigation talks with the person who's been placed on quarantine or isolation, to find out where they might have been in that building or who they've come in contact with. So it would not be a blanket, everybody that works in that building needs to be notified but rather, the people that were actually directly, maybe involved with that individual.

COL GREENBERG - I want to just follow up with just the how things are working at the garrison and in the hospital. So like I said before, I have a Public Health Emergency Officer and CAPT Judy and I are obviously linked as well. We talk daily. Anything that happens on the installation about COVID-19, we do direct coordination to ensure that our personnel, whether custodial or public works, are in direct coordination with the hospital to make sure that we're following all of the guidelines. Whether it's notifying people, tracing people, isolating areas, all of the procedural stuff that we're doing to protect the community is all in unison with the hospital.

COL GREENBERG – For unanswered questions, we will use that frequently asked page on the website to post answers to any of the unanswered questions. We are going to periodically do this every Thursday. However, if there is any type of conditional changes or anything that would deem us to need another Virtual Town Hall, we will do that at that time and we'll provide 24 hour notice. So with that, I'm going to turn it over to cap Judy for any closing remarks.

CAPT JUDY - Hey, I just want to say thanks. This is an incredible community to be a part of and there's been great outpouring both towards the hospital staff who are caring for patients and doing all of that screening, as well as for the patients in the hospital, and I'm just incredibly proud to be part of this Fort Belvoir community so thanks for what you're doing for our staff and for our patients as we're all in this together.

COL GREENBERG - Thank you for listening to us. Thank you for providing us feedback and thank you for allowing us to really communicate out to the force. Hopefully we were very clear in our communications. If there are miscommunications or inaccurate information, that is not a good thing. I want to make sure that people understand if you do not have accurate information that's been verified, please do not post that on any social media. We only want put out the most accurate information.

Second, I want to thank everyone who supports Fort Belvoir who's coming to work every day; who are making sure that our facilities and our installations is still running. Our first priority is to protect our community, but we also have to have mission assurance.

We have a whole host of mission partners that are still operating day to day. The personnel have to come in and the installation needs to support them. Thank you to everyone teleworking, thank you, our first responders, the hospital, firefighters, police, Commissary, Exchange, CDC workers, construction workers, custodial contractors, everyone for coming in each day, and endangering their lives to provide a service for someone else. Thank you for doing that, we couldn't continue on without that support.

My number one priority, during this health emergency, is to protect our community. We will continue to keep you updated on everything we're doing to beat this virus. I asked you to do all the precautionary measures, including social distancing, that have been prescribed by the by the CDC. Thank you for participating in the virtual Town Hall, a closed caption video will be posted on Facebook. Continue to use our Facebook page and our website as a resource for our latest information. Stay safe. Thank you for listening in, and we look forward to the next update.