Health Care Workers on the Front Lines

Health care providers across the country are falling ill and being quarantined after exposure to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). While no nationwide data has been released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), medical associations, or health care worker unions, a government official speaking to the Washington Post on the condition of anonymity stated on March 17 that the government has received reports of more than 60 infections among health care workers. Only a dozen were related to travel.

Health care workers are expected to experience a disproportionate share of infections during the current pandemic. The risks that accompany caring for infectious, seriously ill people during a pandemic are nearly impossible to avoid. In the Lombardy region of Italy, 20 percent of health care providers have been infected with the virus. In China, as of February 24, 3,387 health care providers were infected. The following list links to stories of health care professionals – the individuals essential to combatting the current pandemic and maintaining public health – who have contracted the disease.

Seattle, Wash. – Dr. Stephen Schwartz, **pathologist** and professor at the University of Washington, has died after contracting COVID-19. It is unclear how he contracted the virus.

Kirkland, Wash. – An **emergency room physician** in his 40s at EvergreenHealth Medical Center has contracted COVID-19 and is in stable but critical condition. The doctor used personal protective equipment (PPE) and it is not known whether he acquired the virus in the community or at work.

Nashville, Tenn. – Vanderbilt University Medical Center has confirmed that "less than 20 employees" have tested positive for COVID-19. According to CEO Jeff Balser, M.D., they believe none became infected through patient contact and all have quarantined at their homes.

Washington State; Paterson, N.J. – Two **emergency room physicians** in their 40s and 70s are hospitalized in critical condition with COVID-19. It is unclear whether they were infected at their hospitals or in their communities.

Pittsfield, Mass. – More than 160 employees of Berkshire Medical Center are quarantined in their homes after exposure to patients who tested positive for the virus. The medical center has hired 54 temporary nurses specializing in medical/surgical, intensive care, and emergency services. The medical center remains in need of five respiratory therapists and two radiology technicians.

Baltimore, Md. – A provider has tested positive for COVID-19 at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Philadelphia, Pa. – St. Christopher's Hospital for Children has closed its intensive-care unit to new patients and closed its Level 1 trauma unit after one of its physicians tested positive for the virus. A Children's Hospital of Philadelphia **cardiologist** at the King of Prussia campus has also been hospitalized with coronavirus. The hospital was forced to temporarily shut down its cardiology office and adjacent clinic.

Bridgeport, Conn. – Officials have reported that a **community physician** from New York State has tested positive for the virus after having made rounds at Bridgeport Hospital.

White Plains, N.Y. – A doctor at Maple Medical has tested positive for COVID-19.

Lancaster, Pa. – An independent health care worker at Lancaster General Hospital has tested positive for COVID-19.

Santa Cruz, Calif. – A 36-year-old **emergency medical technician** has tested positive for the virus.