

Team Sheppard,

This morning, the Wichita Falls-Wichita County Public Health District announced the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in our community.

If you have not already, I encourage you to watch the [press conference](#), which you can do on our base [Facebook page](#). In the meantime, let me summarize the facts presented at the press conference.

The patient is a 64-year-old Wichita County resident who traveled to Budapest, in Hungary. The patient flew into Dallas-Fort Worth Airport and drove to Wichita Falls, directly to their home. They developed a cough and sore throat, then contacted and was seen and tested by their private physician. The patient is being cared for at home and their movement is restricted to their care setting only. All public health guidelines were followed throughout, and the only other person the patient had contact with upon their return was their spouse, who is also self-isolated and currently is showing no symptoms.

There is no known connection between the patient and Sheppard Air Force Base.

Now, what does this mean for us?

First, it emphasizes the importance of limiting travel. Obviously, the Department of Defense has already limited non-mission-essential official travel, as well as personal travel for military members.

While the DOD personal travel limitations do not apply to civilian employees, military family members or contractors, this case illustrates why we are asking these teammates to voluntarily limit their travel. I know it's emotional. I know it involves some sacrifice. But it's the right thing to do for our team, our families and our community.

Second, it means we need to continue the efforts we have already been making.

- **Wash your hands, correctly and often, and use hand sanitizer when you cannot wash**
- **Practice good social distancing – six feet is the guidance – and avoid gathering in groups**
- **Suspend travel! If you are sick stay home, but even if you are well, avoid travel and exposure as much as possible**
- **Take care of each other. We're social distancing and limiting gatherings, but we still need to check in with our teammates, family and neighbors.**

Finally, it means we need to all take a collective breath, stay calm, and continue to think through this. Base leaders are in constant contact meeting daily – all virtually I might add – to discuss additional measures and actions we should consider now and as things evolve, and to work through the inevitable challenges this unprecedented situation presents. We are working just as closely with our community partners.

We know this is having an impact on families and individuals. It's a tough time, and we all need to be focused on taking care of each other. We are all in this together. Keep funneling your questions and ideas up the chain of command, through social media channels or other means. We are working hard to keep you informed. As always, please take care of yourselves, your families and your teammates. We will get through this, together. One team, one fight.

Excellence is our standard. Let's work this this challenge in the same fashion!

Thank you, and have a great day.

Sincerely
Col Bell

KENYON K. BELL, Colonel, USAF
Installation Commander
Sheppard AFB TX