

Team Sheppard,

This morning our Public Health team notified Col Driggers and I of our first confirmed case of COVID-19 at Sheppard Air Force Base. It is a travel-related case involving a member of the 80th Flying Training Wing.

The good news is that everyone involved did exactly the right things. Because of that, our Public Health experts believe the risk of further spread from this case is low.

The member traveled to Las Vegas prior to travel restrictions being implemented, returned by air to Dallas-Fort Worth Airport and drove directly home. Prior to reporting to work or anywhere else, the member notified the chain of command. Squadron leadership wisely acted out of an abundance of caution and directed the member to quarantine at home with all family members. The member and family members followed all quarantine guidelines.

After experiencing mild symptoms early this week, the member called ahead to the medical clinic to request care. The medical staff followed all required safety protocols to isolate the patient and provide needed care, including administering a COVID-19 test. The member is currently in isolation at home with family members, who remain in quarantine. We can all be grateful that everyone involved acted prudently and in the best interest of our base and local community. We need to follow their examples as we continue to take all possible steps to limit the spread of COVID-19 on base and in our local community.

This is a challenging task in a training environment, there is no doubt about it. We rely on leaders at all levels to implement the CDC guidelines as much as possible in their daily activities and to find creative and innovative solutions to maximize social distancing, hand hygiene and cleanliness in classrooms, workshops, hangars, dormitories, dining facilities and other training areas.

Leaders in both wings are working to find and implement measures to support this effort, but as is always true in our Air Force, it's leadership at the squadron, flight and workcenter levels that will make the most difference. Front-line supervisors, MTLs, instructors, NCOs and civilian leaders are the key to finding and implementing the best local solutions across the broad spectrum of our missions.

Thank you for what you do. Please continue to wash your hands often and use hand sanitizer when you can't wash. Practice social distancing and enforce it in the people you lead. Limit your travel – stay home as much as possible and avoid groups; ten is the rule of thumb, but smaller is better. Disinfect frequently used items and surfaces.

A positive case was bound to happen so this should not surprise us. Our response is most important. We must continue to take care of each other, be a friend, neighbor and wingman. We will get through this together. Together we win... and we will conquer this like all other challenges.

#ConquerCOVID19 #WeWin

Sincerely,

Col Bell

KENYON K. BELL, Colonel, USAF

82d Training Wing and Installation Commander

Sheppard AFB TX