

NEWS RELEASE

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DENALI CENTER RESIDENT TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

Fairbanks, Alaska (March 28, 2020) – Foundation Health Partners (FHP) has confirmed the first positive COVID-19 test at its long-term care facility, Denali Center (DC).

As a health care facility, Denali Center’s primary goal is keeping our residents and staff safe. For the last two months, DC has adopted and rigorously followed the guidelines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and State of Alaska Section of Epidemiology to help keep this virus from contacting our most vulnerable population. The residents were kept apart and outside visitors were prohibited from entering the building. We and the Section of Epidemiology believe the resident came into contact with a staff member who also tested positive for COVID-19.

DC staff implemented the precautions above as well as proactively began the practice of social distancing, intensive and more frequent cleaning and disinfection of surfaces, and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). In addition, beginning March 16, 2020, all DC staff began to undergo screenings at the beginning of the shift and every 8 hours. The screening process includes logging temperatures and checking for any viral-like symptoms. Anyone experiencing an elevated temperature or COVID-like symptoms will be immediately sent home, symptoms reviewed by a healthcare professional, and not able to return to work until symptom free for 72 hours.

Upon receiving notification of the DC resident’s positive COVID-19 test result on Friday, March 27, 2020, DC leadership made an immediate phone call to the Section of Epidemiology to begin a risk assessment. Following the call with the State, we began to implement the most extreme and aggressive measures we’ve taken in an effort to mitigate the spread. These changes, recommended to us by the Section of Epidemiology and Public Health, include the following:

- Testing every Denali Center staff member and resident for COVID-19
- All staff providing direct patient care utilizing full PPE (eye protection, gown, mask, gloves and a face shield)
- Masking of all residents
- Self-isolation for all residents for 14 days per CDC guidelines
- A terminal clean of DC that includes an intense disinfecting procedure that involves removing every detachable item in the room for disinfection and then properly disinfecting light fixtures, air ducts and all surfaces from the ceiling down to the floor
- Restriction of resident movement including reduction of physical contact
- Discontinuation of all communal living activities for 14 days

According to the CDC, older adults are more susceptible to more severe COVID-19 due to age and, in some cases, underlying health conditions. It is imperative that the Interior community remain vigilant to guard against the further spread of COVID-19. For the most current information including the best way to protect yourself, visit the World Health Organization’s (WHO) website <https://www.who.int> or the CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/>

About Foundation Health Partners

Located in Interior Alaska, Foundation Health Partners is a community owned and operated health system that includes Tanana Valley Clinic, Fairbanks Memorial Hospital, and Denali Center. Tanana Valley Clinic is the largest and most comprehensive locally-owned clinic in the state of Alaska. Fairbanks Memorial Hospital is a 152-bed hospital that provides comprehensive care in more than 27 specialties, and Denali Center is a co-located short- and long-term care facility with 90 beds. Together, these three facilities form an integrated health care system that provides care for the Fairbanks community at every stage of life. For more information, visit. www.FoundationHealth.org.

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