



from the office of
Senator Brian Boquist

MEDIA AVAILABILITY: MEDICAL DIRECTOR TO OFFER CLINICAL UPDATE ON COVID-19 SITUATION AT OREGON VETERANS' HOME IN LEBANON

News Release from Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs

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The Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs is pleased to announce that COVID-19 testing has been completed on all 151 residents at the Oregon Veterans' Home in Lebanon. There are 14 residents who have tested positive for COVID-19, and who are being cared for by dedicated staff members following established infectious disease prevention protocols and public health guidelines.

Dr. Rob Richardson, D.O., one of the medical directors at the Home, will be available by teleconference today to give media an update on the clinical status of the residents who are COVID-positive and answer questions about the care that is being provided at the Home.

When: 3:30 p.m., Thursday, March 19

Call-in Information: 866-377-3315. Participant Code: 7605314#

Dr. Richardson is a doctor of osteopathic medicine and has been in family practice for 40 years. He also works with Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital and is an assistant professor at the Western University of Health Sciences, College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific-Northwest.

Follow-up article:

[Lebanon vets home update: One critical, one serious, other 12 in good condition](#)

- [Bennett Hall](#)
- Corvallis Gazette-Times
- Mar 19, 2020

Most of the 14 residents diagnosed with COVID-19 at the Edward C. Allworth Veterans' Home are in good condition, although one is listed as critical and another as serious, a physician for the Lebanon facility said Thursday afternoon during a conference call with reporters.

All 14 infected residents are being treated by staff following established infection-prevention and public health guidelines, said Dr. Rob Richardson, one of the medical directors for the home, and all of the patients who are symptomatic are quartered in two of the facility's 11 houses.

The Oregon Health Authority announced last weekend that an employee of the Veterans' Home had tested positive for COVID-19, the infectious respiratory infection caused by a new strain of coronavirus. The employee was sent home when symptoms appeared and has been in isolation ever since, the OHA announcement said. Symptoms generally appear within 14 days after someone contracts the disease, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Some of the infected Veterans' Home residents are being treated with Plaquenil and intravenous antibiotics, Richardson said. Known generically as hydroxychloroquine, the drug was developed decades ago to treat malaria but has shown promise in treating COVID-19, especially in combination with antibiotics.

The patients receiving Plaquenil appear to be doing well, Richardson added.

"One of the biggest complaints is they're tired of being in their rooms," he said. "Most of them have been fever-free or in low-grade fever for the last few days."

The remaining 137 residents of the Veterans' Home have tested negative for the disease, Richardson said.

"We have tested over 200 employees also who have been around these clients so we can make sure we are not spreading this virus through the community," he said. "Those who don't get tested will not be around patients for 14 days."

Richardson bristled at the suggestion that the Veterans' Home might have put Lebanon residents at risk by not acting swiftly or decisively enough to isolate potentially infected veterans.

"I think the question should have been why didn't the rest of this community take more steps to ensure they didn't transmit this virus to my veterans," he said. "I don't think the community should worry about the virus being spread (by the Veterans' Home)."

The doctor said the facility began monitoring for symptoms during the early stages of the coronavirus outbreak, which was first reported in China in December and was officially declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11. The first two cases at the Veterans' Home were announced the same day by the Linn County Health Department, which said anyone at the home who had possibly been exposed to the infected residents would be quarantined for two weeks.

Richardson noted that veterans from the home had stopped participating in a program at a local school before anyone at the facility showed symptoms of COVID-19 and that strict limits have been placed on visitors, with residents limited to speaking with friends and family via Skype or through the closed windows of their rooms.

In general, Richardson added, all the infected residents are in good spirits.

"Overall, I think they are holding up well," he said.

"They're veterans," he added. "They do have more room than they would in a foxhole, (and) we have had community support. ... They are really encouraging each other."