

## Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare takes on Coronavirus rumors

[TaMarvyn Waters](#), Tallahassee Democrat Published 3:27 p.m. ET March 6, 2020 | Updated 4:01 p.m. ET March 6, 2020



Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare Building Exterior Wednesday, June 5, 2019 (Photo: Tori Schneider/Tallahassee Democrat)

Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare says there's no truth to rumors circulating this week of patients testing positive there for coronavirus and being sent home for self-isolation.

Since the outbreak went global, TMH has evaluated three residents who all were cleared based on the hospital's screening tools and protocol, said Danielle Buchanan, a TMH spokeswoman.

"The information circulating on social media about TMH having a patient with coronavirus in isolation within the hospital is false," Buchanan said. "As an organization, we are following the protocol outlined by the (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) and are in communication with the Leon County Department of Health.

"If a patient were to be tested and assumed or confirmed positive for the coronavirus, an announcement would be made to the public just as the other confirmed cases in the state of Florida have been announced."

Rumors of local cases feed into the hyperawareness and fears of a rapid spread. The virus has killed 14 U.S. citizens and more than 3,460 people worldwide, officials say.

Originating in Wuhan, China, the coronavirus has spread to more than 100,000 cases worldwide and 233 confirmed cases in states like Colorado, Maryland, Washington, Nevada, along with four in Florida and an additional five "repatriated" cases of Florida residents.

"A repatriated case is when the United States Department of State officially coordinates the return of a Florida resident to the United States," the [Department of Health's website \(http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/COVID-19/\)](http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/COVID-19/) explains.

As of about noon Friday, the Florida Department of Health was reporting 55 negative test results and 51 pending testing results. In addition, 264 are being monitored and a total of 981 people in Florida have been monitored to date.

In order to be tested for the coronavirus, patients must meet the clinical criteria — including fever, cough and labored breathing — to be tested.



**A door entrance of a laboratory where potential cases of the coronavirus will be tested at the Florida Department of Health Laboratory in Tampa, Florida on March 2, 2020. (Photo: Octavio Jones, AP)**

"The tests are not run locally," said Dr. Alex Ho, an emergency medicine physician at TMH. "We would obtain samples and the Department of Health in conjunction with the CDC will determine if the patient will be tested for the coronavirus."

Dr. Ho said people are appropriately concerned but said it's important to remember most patients will have mild symptoms, adding they'll be able to take care of themselves if they test positive.

He said cold symptoms should be treated as such. However, if symptoms worsen and there's respiratory distress, Ho advised coming to the hospital for evaluation. He said there's no specific treatment for the coronavirus, but the hospital can manage issues such as organ failure and breathing challenges.

Meanwhile, no one has been evaluated for the coronavirus at Capital Regional Medical Center.

"We continue to communicate with our hospital and medical staff to provide necessary updates, reinforce appropriate infection response and prevention protocols, and ensure access to necessary supplies and equipment," said Rachel Stiles, a hospital spokeswoman.

"Our staff and physicians know to take every precaution to control and prevent the spread of any infectious disease. If a patient is displaying symptoms such as fever or respiratory distress, measures are taken to respond appropriately to the patient's needs and limit exposure to other individuals at Capital Regional Medical Center."

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