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## All Herbert Grigg Home for the Aged Staff Test Negative for Covid-19; Facility Remains on Lockdown for Safety of its Residents

Coronavirus / **Published On July 20, 2020 05:46 AM /**

Staff Consortium **July 20, 2020**

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The Dept. of Human Services has confirmed to the Consortium that all Herbert Grigg Home for the Aged employees have tested negative for Covid-19, a sigh of relief for D.H.S. after it required all employees and residents of the seniors center to be tested following a possible exposure incident. Additionally, all staff have been advised to stay home if they feel ill until cleared by the Department of Health, D.H.S. said.

All residents of the facility [were also Covid-19 free](#) as of the weekend.

Last week the department started calling family members of Herbert Grigg residents to inform them that mass testing would occur at the facility after exposure to the virus, according to family

members who spoke with the Consortium. D.H.S. said Herbert Grigg Home for the Aged has 23 residents. Asked about the exposure, D.H.S. did not address the matter directly. Instead, it pointed to steps it had taken to control a potential breakout, including mass-testing at all assisted living facilities territory-wide.

Covid-19 protocols to govern government-run assisted living facilities have been in place since March, the department said. "As the spread of the virus evolves, we will enhance protocols to ensure we are doing everything possible to keep residents and staff safe. We will remain vigilant and continue taking daily temperatures and screening residents and staff daily for other signs, symptoms or inadvertent exposure (of staff members) to someone who is positive," said Michelle Francis, director of strategic operations and planning.

With the facility on lockdown in a bid to maximize safety for its residents, creativity from employees and benevolent acts from community members have helped residents through this difficult time, the department said.

"Staff have been very creative in developing activities for residents that promote wellness. Our facilities have been blessed by our community and (individuals and organizations) who have donated masks, hand sanitizer and treats. Residents have also received cards from community members who simply want to encourage and show concern," Ms. Francis said.

Human Services locked down all the territory's government-run senior centers since March. "We enabled virtual visitation for residents and family members through technology. To maintain a sense of community and vibrancy, we enabled virtual church for those who want the experience through radio and online services," D.H.S. said.

In the U.S., deaths of staff and residents at senior-care centers represent at least 40 percent of overall Covid-19 fatalities, according to the Wall Street Journal. The next highest rate is Ireland, with a 62 percent share.

At least 57,000 residents and workers have died from the coronavirus at nursing homes and other long-term care facilities for older adults in the United States, according to a New York Times database. As of July 15, the virus had infected more than 316,000 people at some 14,000 facilities.

According to the Times, Covid-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, is known to be particularly lethal to adults in their 60s and older who have underlying health conditions. And it can spread more easily through congregate facilities, where many people live in a confined environment and workers move from room to room.