

Results negative for Baylor student tested for coronavirus

January 27, 2020

WACO—Test results were negative for a Baylor University student who had been suspected of having a case of coronavirus, the Waco-McLennan County Public Health District announced Jan. 27.

Samples from the student, who had traveled to China, had been sent to the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta to be tested for the 2019 novel coronavirus several days earlier.

“This is very good news, and we are deeply grateful to our local and university health care providers and officials and the Waco-McLennan County Public Health District for their approach to this case, their proactive guidance and expertise and the compassionate care extended to our student while we awaited the CDC results,” said Sharon W. Stern, medical director for Baylor University Health Services.

“We continue to take this issue seriously and remain vigilant. Our prayers are with all those affected and for the doctors, nurses and other health officials who are working to understand and contain the virus. At this time, we ask our campus community to continue to take actions to prevent the spread of the flu and other respiratory illnesses.”

University officials stressed there are no other suspected cases of novel coronavirus within the Baylor community at this time. Baylor will keep students, faculty and staff apprised in the event the situation changes, officials said.

On Jan. 24, the local public health district reported the student had met CDC criteria for further testing and evaluation after being treated at an

area hospital.

The CDC believes at this time that symptoms of novel coronavirus may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure.

As part of a coordinated response, the public health district and Baylor informed the campus community about the possible case.

Baylor followed CDC and public health guidelines

While waiting for results, Baylor followed guidance from the public health district and the CDC. As a precaution, the individual was moved to an isolated room on campus with its own HVAC system. That room was not located in a residence hall, the university confirmed.

Facility Services thoroughly sanitized the student's residence hall room, as well as the residence hall where the individual lives. During the isolation period, the student was monitored by Baylor, state and local health officials. The university also worked with the student to make sure needs were being met during the isolation period.

Mark G. Childers, associate vice president of public safety and security at Baylor, expressed appreciation for the university's emergency response team, as well as the coordinated response between local, state and federal officials as they handled this case.

"We are continuously assessing and reassessing our protocols, procedures and training to ensure the safety and security of our students, faculty and staff," he said. "That is our mission every day—to keep our campus safe, and we appreciate our partners in helping us fulfill that mission."

Baylor will continue to work closely with University Health Services, the

Waco-McLennan County Public Health District and state and federal health officials, officials said.

Due to government and university privacy policies, Baylor is unable to disclose additional information regarding the student such as residence location or class attendance.

Recommended action

According to the Centers for Disease Control, any individual who traveled to China on or after Dec. 1, 2019, and who feels sick with fever, cough or difficulty breathing should:

- Seek medical care right away. Before going to a doctor's office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.
- Avoid contact with others.
- Not travel while sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.