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Officials await CDC word on coronavirus

By GREGORY YEE
greg@postandcourier.com

Officials are awaiting Thursday word from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention about the nature of the COVID-19 coronavirus disease.

The virus, which first emerged in China in December and has spread to more than half of the world's countries by Monday, the worldwide case total was more than 14,000. While 62,000 people who had been infected have recovered, 300 people have died, mostly in China and South Korea, where more than 16 million people are under quarantine.

In the United States, the number of confirmed cases and there have been at least 21 deaths as of Monday. Authorities in South Carolina have been urging the public not to panic and are emphasizing the importance of handwashing and personal responsibility in containing the disease, especially for the elderly and people with chronic conditions.

A statement on Monday, Gov. Henry McMaster urged South Carolinians not to be alarmed or to speculate. “It’s important to remember that each individual is responsible for their own actions and personal choices,” McMaster said. “If you feel sick, stay home and contact your doctor.”

Officials told The Citizen, meanwhile, confirmed that 25 cadets attended the Conservative Political Action Conference, which ran Feb. 26 to 29 in National Harbor, Maryland, D.C. One individual who attended the conference later developed the novel coronavirus.

"None of them are exhibiting any signs of the coronavirus at this time," said Col. John Drey, a spokesman for the military college. "We do have the means and we are monitoring the situation. We are prepared to take action as is appropriate and will follow its necessity." All cadets live in barracks on campus and college officials are in "daily contact with DHSS," Drey said.

"We continue to make sure that we've got the latest information from them and we will follow their recommendations," he said.

News of the development at CPAC caused alarm after it was revealed that cadet's potential contact with U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Tex., and another prominent lawmaker with close ties to President Donald Trump who also spoke at the event.

So far, no one who had contact with the individual with the novel coronavirus has developed symptoms. Cruz went into voluntary isolation with U.S. Sen. Richard Burr, who also attended, and was in contact with the individual. Senator Trump, who also attended CPAC caused alarm after it was revealed that person had contact with infected individual has been recently treated for an illness caused by a dangerous virus.

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