

US shuts Homeland Security office in Washington amid employee infection fears

3 March 2020

The US Department of Homeland Security closed an office in Washington State early Tuesday amid fears that one of its employees may have contracted the coronavirus.

Acting DHS Secretary Chad Wolf told a hearing in Congress that the employee had reported feeling unwell in the wake of visiting a relative in the King County, Washington nursing home where four patients have died from the disease.

While the employee has not been diagnosed with the virus, the DHS office is being shut for two weeks, Wolf said.

"Late last night the department was made aware of a situation involving a DHS employee," he told the House Homeland Security Committee.

"The employee did not report to work when they felt ill," Wolf said.

"We are taking these steps out of an abundance of caution," he said.

The [employee](#) had visited the Life Care Center nursing home in Kirkland, Washington before the spread of the virus in the facility was known.

The worker's family has now "self-quarantined," he said, and other employees were told to work from home to reduce the threat of the spread of the virus.

Four [elderly patients](#) at Life Care have died in the past week, and two other people in the area have also died.

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