

## Peterson AFB: 21st Space Wing Town Hall Transcript- Thule Highlights

21st Space Wing commander, Col. Falzarano  
21st Medical Group commander, Col. Vaughn

21st Space Wing commander, Col. Falzarano: Well hello Team Peterson, Knights, and all those in the Colorado Springs greater community. First off, I want to apologize for not being on the first FB town hall we had last week. As many of you heard I was on quarantine, fortunately right now I am out of quarantine, and not Covid-19 positive. Hopefully all of you are doing well and staying healthy. I want to thank all of you for being patient throughout this time. I have just been completely impressed by the spirit and can-do attitude of the community. There are a lot of people on the front lines, providing mission-essential services and capabilities for everyone and our families. So, thank you. And thank you to everyone else who are being good teammates, patient, and looking out for one another. As you know there have been a lot of changes in the last few days, the last week, there are changes every day and we are trying to do our best to digest those changes, figure out what they mean, and communicate them to all of you so that you know what to do for your own specific situation.

Every time I have the opportunity to speak to our team, I make sure to emphasize that you are a part of, we are a part of something bigger, the 21st Space Wing. We talk about the status of 27 worldwide locations – that's the makeup of the 21st Space Wing– stretching across 14 time zones and 10 different countries and numerous states from coast to coast. And so, every day we are talking to the leadership of all those organizations and tracking the status state by state whether or not there are any positive tests, what the concerns of every single one of those organizations are, family members that are there. We take all those concerns seriously and I want to thank everyone for asking questions, bringing forward your concerns. Because some of the things you're thinking about are making us better, making us able to go and think through some of these complex situations.

I want to give thanks to all of the folks who are on the front lines now. Who are working through and helping us provide critical services. The first one I want to talk about is Mental Health. Our mental health professionals across the city and community have an incredible workload as more people are reaching out to them since we've put people in isolation. And not everyone reacts the same to isolation as everyone else. Everyone has unique circumstances. So I ask for everyone no matter where you're at, what clothes you wear if you're military, civilian, or a dependent that you stop and take a little time to think about mental health and think about who you've reached out to in the community and on your team. And whether or not they're doing okay because there are some folks out there who I think are going to need a friend and need some connection. From a distance, they need some connection.

21st Medical Group commander, Col. Chris Vaughn: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the activities coming out of the medical group. There are a lot of people teleworking, and there are a lot of people still needed to keep our local areas, and overall nation, functioning. Let me share a little bit about what's going on in the medical group at this time. We're continuing to provide most of our clinic services, even with the recent HPCON Charlie and Colorado's stay in place order, however we have changed most of those to virtual appointments instead of bringing people into the clinic.

Our population truly spans all across the entire region and we're tracking COVID-19 trends in partnership with county and state public health departments as well as with our neighboring medical facilities. As we continue to update and adjust our medical services, we will continue to update you as well.

**QUESTION:** *What steps are you making to ensure limited exposure to the clinic teams working the POT, medical staff and security forces?*

Col. Vaughn: Right now, our medical teams are truly on the front line at this moment. It's critically important that we work to minimize the risk for that staff. We have made a lot of appointments from face to face to virtual- that helps to reduce exposure to medical staff and patients. We've started a healthcare working monitoring program to track staff that are at a higher risk of exposure. Security forces has switched to a visual CAC inspection which helps to cut down on exposure as well. The recommendations of today may change next week as more data comes in, but it's always been important consideration of conducting our operations while also mitigating those risks.

Col. Falzarano: We would love to be able to provide protective equipment to everyone, not just those at the gates but the commissary as well...many folks around the installation that are providing mission critical support. But right now, our primary concern is our, I call them, our "medical warriors" and we absolutely need to be sure that we're protecting them because they're protecting and taking care of us.

**QUESTION:** *What is the protocol for families who have a member that needs to self-quarantine, while also protecting the rest of the family members (some of whom might be high risk)?*

Col. Vaughn: Here's some advice for members of the same household, especially the individual who is quarantined or isolated: continue to practice good social distancing as much as possible within that household. If you can, continue to maintain a six-foot zone from the other family members. Having a separate bedroom, and bathroom, for the individual can be especially helpful. Continue to follow hand hygiene and other routine procedures such as wiping down surfaces after use. All of these practices within a household are definitely important especially if you have a family member who could be higher risk.

**QUESTION:** *What are the guidelines for playing at playgrounds?*

Col. Falzarano: Playgrounds should be the same off-base as they are on-base. Maintain social distances. Kids like to play on jungle gyms, but I ask parents just to lead by example and practice safe distances and keep track of your kids, where they're at. If there are too many or groups of them, try to keep them distracted and move them apart if you can. It's hard to tell kids to stay six feet apart, so I understand the difficulty and I appreciate your patience. Also, don't get complacent. This is a fast-moving situation and there is no way that we can go and put a mark on people's doors saying they're positive and keep up with that 100 percent. That's why we have the stay at home order. It's kind of best to assume that everyone is exposed and to maintain social distancing.

Col. Vaughn: It's also important for parents to maintain social distance parameters while getting those healthy outlets like outdoor activity during this time.

**QUESTION:** *What will be done (besides told to wash hands) for non-mission essential individuals who have high-risk members in their household but are still being required to report?*

Col. Vaughn: In the absence of any symptoms, members going to work should continue to socially distance while at work. Every work center is a little bit different, some are close quarters, but continue to work with supervisors and unit commanders on what some of the options are to maintain good social distancing. When at work, clean and disinfect workstation when you get there and also at the end of the duty day give things a good wipe-down.

Upon the first sign of symptoms such as fever, cough or shortness of breath the individual should isolate themselves from the family members. They should also notify their leadership.

**QUESTION:** *Why is the med group self-quarantine timeline different from what the CDC says to do?*

Col. Vaughn: They aren't. Our direction is directly aligned with the Centers for Disease Control guidance. There is a lot of information out there, so make sure your information is from factual authoritative sources. It can have different levels of reliability. For more information, go to [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

**QUESTION:** *When are movements going to start again?*

Col. Falzarano: There are different situations for different people. Everyone is kind of stuck and we're approaching them on a case by case basis. We ask that if you have specific questions watch the US Transcom where they hold monthly meetings. I will continue to post the latest guidance on movement orders. If you have any questions, our entire force support squadron is here and working from home. They know life things come up and you need answers to critical questions. You can call them at (210) 652-3357 for more information.

Col. Falzarano: Every day, like every other branch of service, we are focused on maintaining services during this time. Hopefully this was helpful, we are going to continue to do this every Friday. I am going to continue talking to all of the leaders of organizations that you're connected to multiple times during the week, sending out emails and messages. I would encourage everyone, if you haven't done so yet, to download the AF Connect app. If you're a Facebook person, log on and stay up to date. We're also pushing out many notifications and updates on AF Connect as well so you know something has changed.

The final thing I'd say is thank you for all of your patience and the incredibly family and teamwork we've seen over the last few weeks. We have no idea how long this is going to continue, hopefully there's a breakthrough here. If not, if it continues on for a long period of time, I'm extremely confident we will get through it just by talking to you. I want to conclude with saying that I am prouder than ever to serve by each and every one of you. Our focus is to make sure you, me, and all of us are built to last.