

A **61 year old female** employee was exposed to **COVID-19** while working as a Sitter/Transporter and typically cared for COVID-19 patients. The employee floated to various areas within the hospital such as Med Surg., Critical Care, ED and the COVID Unit to perform these duties.

The victim often accessed the Dispatcher's office to obtain assignments for the day. At least 2 additional employees had tested positive that were also Sitter Transporters and had accessed or worked in the dispatcher's office around the same time that the victim became ill. employees

It was determined that when there was a shortage of designated healthcare professionals (HCPs) to provide direct care to suspected and confirmed COVID-19 positive patients, employees would be pulled from other floors to work on the 5th floor COVID Unit. Some employees worked as Sitters/Transporters who were designated to cohort patients that were high risk such as those suffering from mental health illnesses and those needing 24-hour assistance. Some of these patients were also suspected or confirmed COVID-19 positive patients. However, employer/employee interviews indicated that patients may come into the facility that have not been tested for COVID-19 and are positive. Employee interviews indicated that they are exposed to the virus while caring for a patient while only wearing a surgical mask until the patient has been tested and the test comes back positive.

According to the Senior Director of HR, the employee began having COVID-19 symptoms on 12/10/2020, which was the employee's last date of work. However, the First Report of Injury revealed an injury date of 12/02/2020. The employee's timesheet also revealed the employee's last date of work as 12/10/2020. The employee had worked five days between 12/02/2020 and 12/10/2020.

Citation(s) as Originally Issued

A complete inspection was conducted at the accident scene. Some of the items cited may not directly relate to the fatality.

Citation 1 Item 1a

Type of Violation: Serious

\$5,000

29 CFR 1910.134(e)(7)(i): The employer did not provide additional medical evaluations that complied with the requirements of 29 CFR 1910.134 when an employee reported medical signs or symptoms that were related to ability to use a respirator:

The employer did not provide a follow-up medical evaluation for each employee required to wear a particulate filtering facepiece respirator while performing Sitter activities and reported medical signs or symptoms that were related to the employee's ability to use a respirator.

Citation 1 Item 1b

Type of Violation: Serious Grouped

29 CFR 1910.134(e)(7)(iv):The employer did not provide additional medical evaluations that complied with the requirements of 29 CFR 1910.134 when a change occurred in the workplace conditions that resulted in a substantial increase in the physiological burden placed on an employee:

The employer did not provide an additional medical evaluation for each employee required to wear a particulate filtering facepiece respirator while performing Sitter activities when changes in the workplace occurred including but not limited to the amount of time the employee wears the respirator and amount of PPE used.