

PLENARY SESSION

Plenary Talk 5 - CDC COVID-19 Response: Grand Princess

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During February 11–21, 2020, the Grand Princess cruise ship sailed roundtrip from San Francisco, California, making four stops in Mexico (voyage A). Most of the 1,111 crew and 68 passengers from voyage A remained on board for a second voyage that departed San Francisco on February 21 (voyage B), with a planned return on March 7.

On March 4, a clinician in California reported two patients with COVID-19 symptoms who had traveled on voyage A, one of whom had positive test results for SARS-CoV-2. CDC notified the cruise line, which began cancelling group activities on voyage B. More than 20 additional cases of COVID-19 among persons who did not travel on voyage B have been identified from Grand Princess voyage A, the majority in California.

On March 5, a response team was transported by helicopter to the ship to collect specimens for SARS-CoV-2 testing from 45 passengers and crew with respiratory symptoms for SARS-CoV-2 testing; 21 (46.7%), including two passengers and 19 crew, had positive test results. Passengers and symptomatic crewmembers were asked to self-quarantine in their cabins, and room service replaced public dining until disembarkation.

Beginning on March 7, Vessel Sanitation Program (VSP) staff and others from the Water, Food, & Environmental Health Services Branch deployed to California to support the Grand Princess disinfection and quarantine and to conduct environmental assessments. There was coordination with a variety of agencies shoreside—Disaster Medical Assistance Teams, Public Health Service, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Port of San Francisco, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Coast Guard, local law enforcement, San Francisco Bar Pilots Association, and many others.

Following docking in Oakland, California, on March 8, passengers and some of the crew were transferred to land-based sites for a 14-day quarantine period or isolation. Persons requiring medical attention for other conditions or for symptoms consistent with COVID-19 were evaluated, tested for SARS-CoV-2 infection, and hospitalized if indicated. Most crew remained onboard. During land-based quarantine in the United States, all persons were offered SARS-CoV-2 testing. Repatriation flights for foreign nationals were organized by several governments in coordination with U.S. federal and California state government agencies.

On March 9, CDC issued a No Sail Order for the Grand Princess because CDC had reason to believe that crew members serving onboard may have been infected with or exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19. Subsequently, on March 14, CDC issued a No Sail Order for all cruise ships operating in U.S. jurisdictions to prevent all new passenger embarkations. With remote support from non-deployed VSP staff, the team worked with the ship's public health team to finalize their disinfection and quarantine plans. The team also monitored the Grand Princess' implementation of the quarantine plan, the disinfection plan, and "routine" ship operations

related to food safety, water safety, ventilation, infection control, vector control, and housekeeping and laundry operations.

LCDR Elizabeth Wittry's presentation covered the logistics for the disembarkation process, the ship disinfection and quarantine procedures, and the shipboard environmental assessment.