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Infected Staff Likely Spread Virus At US Hospital With 35 Deaths: Report

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Los Angeles, United States: The devastating coronavirus outbreak at a nursing home near Seattle where 35 have died was likely fueled by infected staff members continuing to come to work, a report found Wednesday.

The care home is responsible for over half the deaths in the northwestern state of Washington -- itself the US epicenter of the deadly pandemic.

After visiting homes in the region, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) found "staff members who worked while symptomatic" and who "worked in more than one facility" likely contributed to the fatal outbreak.

A lack of personal protective equipment, safety training and delayed recognition of the novel coronavirus -- which was already prevalent in Asia -- also influenced the contagion, it found.

In mid-February, several residents were tested for influenza, but all came back negative.

The Life Care Center in Kirkland, with around 130 residents, treats those in need

of acute care. Many patients had underlying conditions such as hypertension, heart and kidney disease, diabetes and obesity.

At least 35 deaths are confirmed to be associated with the Kirkland home, county officials said Wednesday.

Highlighting the danger posed to care homes, the report recommended "critical" action such as "identifying and excluding symptomatic staff," and "restricting visitation except in compassionate care situations."

A visiting ban is now in place at the home, with relatives of those still inside communicating with their family members via phone or even through the building's glass windows.

Tim Killian, a spokesman for the home, earlier told the Washington Post: "I can't say everything was done perfectly, but I can say it was done within a range of normal operating procedure."

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