



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

APR 08 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDER, U.S. NORTHERN COMMAND

SUBJECT: Authorization to Employ Military Medical Capabilities to Treat COVID-19 Patients

Effective immediately, the Commander, U.S. Northern Command, is authorized, as he deems necessary and appropriate, to employ military medical capabilities under his operational control to treat patients who have contracted coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The treatment of acute patients who have not contracted COVID-19 remains the priority for both USNS COMFORT and USNS MERCY.

Due to the high density of patients who have contracted COVID-19 in the areas in which USNS COMFORT and USNS MERCY are deployed, and the prevalence of patients who have contracted COVID-19 but who are asymptomatic, it is highly likely that trauma patients will unknowingly have COVID-19. Medical personnel will prioritize emergency medical treatment and, when able, screen and/or test patients for COVID-19. In the event that patients test positive for COVID-19, and after patients are in a stable condition, the patients will be transferred to medical treatment facilities dedicated to treatment of COVID-19.

Additionally, the Commander, U.S. Northern Command, is authorized to reconfigure USNS MERCY and USNS COMFORT to allow for the treatment of COVID-19 patients, should emergent conditions warrant such a change.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mark Egan", is located in the lower right quadrant of the page.

cc:
DSD
CJCS
USD(P)