

## *Comfort tests positive for coronavirus*

*The news comes the same day the ship was allowed to take COVID-19 patients.  
By Luis Martinez*



*USNS comfort arrives in New York City Navy medical professionals will assist by offering care to those who don't have the virus.*

*A crew member aboard the U.S. Navy hospital ship USNS Comfort has tested positive for novel coronavirus and is currently in isolation aboard the ship that is currently docked in New York City, according to a U.S. Navy statement.*

*The news comes on the same day that the hospital ship was designated to begin treating COVID-19 patients in New York City, a reversal from the earlier policy that it could only treat patients not infected with the coronavirus.*

*"There is no impact to Comfort's mission, and this will not affect the ability for Comfort to receive patients," according to the Navy statement. "The ship is following protocols and taking every precaution to ensure the health and safety of all crew members and patients on board."*

*"The crew member had no contact with patients," the statement said.*

*The USNS hospital ship Comfort is seen docked at Pier 90 on Manhattan's West Side during the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in New York City, New York, U.S., April 3, 2020.*

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*Because the crew member did not come into contact with patients, it is highly likely that the crew member was asymptomatic when the Comfort left its home port of Norfolk, Virginia, on March 28.*

*Other crew members who had contact with the crew member have tested negative for the virus, said a Navy official. But the official added that out of an abundance of caution they will remain in isolation for several days regardless of the test results.*

*On Monday, President Donald Trump approved the hospital ship's transition to treat coronavirus patients due in large part to the small number of non-coronavirus patients the ship has treated during its week in New York City while civilian hospitals were overwhelmed by COVID-19 patients.*



*President Donald Trump speaks as Assistant Secretary for Health admiral Brett Giroir listens during the daily briefing on the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, in the Brady Briefing Room at the White House on April 6, 2020, in Washington. Mandel Ngan/AFP via Getty Images*

*"Taking on more patients as quickly as possible is critical to helping the city of New York during this pandemic crisis," said Vice Adm. Andrew Lewis, commander of the U.S. Second Fleet. "We listened to the feedback from area health professionals and the community and believe this is the best way we can help our fellow Americans."*

*The field hospital at the Javits Center will be the military's primary facility for COVID-19 patients, but beginning immediately, the Comfort will accept trauma, emergency and urgent care patients without regard to their coronavirus status.*

*To minimize the risk to the ship's crew, they will be kept apart from the medical staff aboard the Comfort to prevent any inadvertent exposure of the virus.*

*And in a further step to prevent exposure, some of the ship's medical personnel -- who will be in contact with COVID-19 patients -- will be moved to a local hotel. That will reduce the number of personnel staying in the ship's berthing areas and improve social distancing.*