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U.S. Army North to oversee military COVID-19 operations in Texas and California

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas – At the request of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and state officials, approximately 740 Department of Defense medical and support professionals from the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force are assigned as part of DoD's ongoing COVID-19 operations in Texas and California. As part of the whole-of-America response, U.S. Army North, U.S. Northern Command's Joint Forces Land Component Command, will oversee the military operation in support of federal efforts and the state.

"We are committed to assisting those in need as part of the ongoing whole-of-America response to COVID-19," said Lt. Gen. Laura J. Richardson, U.S. Army North commander. "At the same time, we remain flexible and capable of providing other defense support to civil authorities as necessary."

In Texas, U.S. Northern Command assigned approximately 580 military medical and support personnel from the U.S. Army and U.S. Navy to support FEMA and the state.

The first of the 580, an 85-member enhanced Urban Augmentation Medical Task Force, from the 627th Hospital Center, Ft. Carson, Colorado, arrived July 6.

On July 10, Texas Governor Greg Abbott announced a second 85-member U.S. Army UAMTF, which began to arrive in Texas today, would go to Houston.

"Texas is grateful to the U.S. Department of Defense for providing these additional resources to Houston and San Antonio as we work to slow the spread of COVID-19 and care for our fellow Texans," said Governor Abbott. "We will continue to work with our local and federal partners to help ensure that all medical needs are met in Houston, San Antonio, and throughout the state."

An additional four, 85-person U.S. Army UAMTFs, along with a 44-person Acute Care Team and four, seven-person Rapid Rural Response Teams from the U.S. Navy, were also activated at the behest of Texas to support statewide efforts.

The first UAMTF to arrive, designated UAMTF 627, began treating patients at five San Antonio hospitals, July 9.

"It's an honor to be in San Antonio, Texas, providing care to patients alongside local hospital staff," said U.S. Army Capt. Sarah Kopaciewicz, a UAMTF 627 critical care nurse embedded with Christus Westover Hills Medical Center. "I was doing similar work,



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treating COVID-19 positive patients, at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington State before being employed here."

In addition to Christus Westover Hills Medical Center, critical care nurses, emergency room nurses, medical surgical nurses, and respiratory specialists from UAMTF 627 are serving at Baptist Health Center, Christus Santa Rosa Medical Center, Methodist Metropolitan and University Hospital.

UAMTF 627, is comprised of Soldiers from Colorado and elsewhere, including Brooke Army Medical Center.

"Our Soldiers train daily to maintain clinical skills so we can save and sustain lives wherever and whenever the nation calls," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Jason Hughes, UAMTF 627 commander. "We're proud to be here to support FEMA and Texas, and will work side by side with hospital workers to help communities as long as we are needed."

In California, U.S. Northern Command assigned approximately 160 military medical and support personnel from the U.S. Air Force to support FEMA and the state.