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N.J. attorney general quarantining after COVID-19 exposure

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New Jersey's top law enforcement official is quarantining at home after an employee tested positive for the coronavirus, officials announced Wednesday.

A "rapid COVID-19 test" state Attorney General Gurbir Grewal took came back positive, but a second PCR test came back negative, according to spokesman Steven Barnes.

Grewal is asymptomatic after having "contact" with the staff member Monday, Barnes wrote.

Rapid tests check if someone's immune system appears to be fighting a coronavirus, according to Stephanie Silvera, a public health professor and epidemiologist at Montclair State University. In contrast, PCR tests are looking for the coronavirus' genetic material.

"It is possible that he's at the early stage" of COVID-19, Silvera said of the different test results. "It could also just be random error."

The identity of the employee was not immediately available. Barnes declined to comment on the staff member's status or when Grewal will be tested again.

The department of law and public safety, which is part of the attorney general's office, is contact tracing everyone in close contact with Grewal, according to the press release.

Grewal will continue working remotely, Barnes said.

"The Attorney General urges members of the public to continue to follow public health guidelines to keep themselves and others safe," Barnes wrote.

Cases in New Jersey are rising, and Gov. Phil Murphy recently quarantined after two staff members tested positive.