

May 12 statement from Dr. Ken Mitchell, chief medical officer of St. David's HealthCare:

“When Ms. Shaw called on March 17, she was having trouble breathing. Shortness of breath can be life threatening, so Ms. Shaw was advised to seek treatment at the most appropriate site of care—the emergency room. Although Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for testing and treatment of COVID-19 are evolving, guidelines for a patient in respiratory distress or any other emergent condition have not changed—call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

At the time Ms. Shaw received care in the hospital, testing for COVID-19 was being administered by the local health authority, Austin Public Health, under the direction of the CDC. Tests were very limited and results could take several days.

In accordance with CDC protocols, the hospital ruled out other possible illnesses first. Ultimately, given her medical assessment and improvement in symptoms while at the hospital, she did not meet the criteria for testing per guidance by the CDC and Austin Public Health.

Fortunately, since that time, the availability of COVID-19 testing has increased significantly, and all of our hospitals can now provide in-house COVID-19 testing at the discretion of the treating physician.”

Ken Mitchell, M.D.
Chief Medical Officer
St. David's HealthCare