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Putin's Spokesman Hospitalized With Coronavirus

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Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov is at least the second person in Putin's administration and the fifth senior government official to test positive for Covid-19. **Valery Sharifulin / TASS**

President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov has been hospitalized with coronavirus, he told the state-run RIA Novosti news agency Tuesday.

"Yes, I got sick, I'm being treated," Peskov told Interfax.

The Kremlin spokesman is at least the second person in Putin's administration and the fifth senior government official to test positive for Covid-19.

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In addition to Culture Minister Olga Lyubimova, Construction Minister Vladimir Yakushev and Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, Putin's first deputy chief of staff Sergei Kiriyenko was reported to have tested positive in mid-April.

It was not immediately clear when Peskov, 52, last met Putin, 67, in person. Peskov told the state-run TASS news agency that he last had face-to-face contacts with Putin "more than a month ago."

Similar questions over Putin's contacts with coronavirus-positive individuals were raised when he visited Moscow's main coronavirus hospital in late March and shook hands with its chief doctor, who tested positive for Covid-19 days later. Putin began working remotely at the presidential residence in Novo-Ogaryovo outside Moscow on April 1 following the news of doctor Denis Protsenko's infection.

Putin and everyone in his administration "are taking all precautionary measures," Peskov said at the time.

Peskov was seen briefly wearing a so-called "virus blocker," an air purification device based on chlorine dioxide, on his lapel days later. The blocker disappeared after questions were raised about its efficacy to ward off coronavirus and its manufacturer said the device "is a disinfectant, not a medical product."

Peskov's wife and famous ice dancer Tatyana Navka told Russian media Tuesday that she has also been hospitalized with coronavirus.

"He brought it from work," Navka told Russia's Daily Storm online news outlet."The entire family was under strict isolation. My husband's been working. In that regard, there's only one argument: it's probably him, since he was the first to get sick."

This story is being updated.

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