A 39 year old female contracted COVID-19 while working at a sleep study facility. The victim worked in the facility as Polysomnographic Tech which conducts onsite sleep studies to diagnose sleep disorders. The facility has eight patient rooms which are monitored with cameras and telemetry by a Polysomnographic Technician.

Patients arrive at the facility, are screened and fitted with sensors on the scalp, temples, chest and legs using an adhesive by the Technicians. Once fitted, the patients are directed to a bedroom where they will sleep for the night under the observation. The Technicians observe the patients from a small room, in close proximity of each other, at a long desk where four computer terminals are located.

Employee and employer interviews indicated that a combination of controls for the facility were not considered, evaluated, or installed to reduce exposure and close contact to coworkers. The facility's manager provided images of the Tech room where the deceased employee worked in the week prior to falling ill. There were no physical barriers installed in the small room where the employees were required to work for the largest portion of a 12-hour shift. Additionally, a second and larger tech room was available for use.

Employees were found to have shared used of a telephone, located in the Tech room, to contact patients to schedule and confirm appointments. Additionally, employees were not provided with a separate dinning space or required to dine outside. Employees would dine together in the Tech room as there was no breakroom or alternative eating area in the facility.

TOSHA determined this fatality to be likely work-related. The employer was aware of employees working in close proximity to each other and were exposed to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-2019).
The employer did not implement timely and effective engineering and work practice controls to ensure that employees at risk for COVID-19 infection were protected from frequent contact with other staff through the use of barriers, social distancing, and alternative workspaces.