



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 21, 2020

COVID-19 Joint Press Communication Update

The Crisis Communication Team would like to report that, at the time of this press release, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Macon County. Thus far, eight tests have been completed in Macon County, with six negative test results and two test results were provided to and tracked by outside counties. These numbers reflect all people tested in Macon County, regardless of the county in which they reside. Our health systems and providers serve residents from various counties, so test results for those living in other counties will be reported by that county. There is also a possibility that a provider has submitted and/or will submit a test to a private lab and the MCHD may not be notified, therefore unable to track that submission. If a private lab test is confirmed positive, the MCHD would be notified at that time. It remains true that Macon County will inform the press and public as soon as possible at the time of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a Macon County resident.

Because testing is not widely available to the general public, it is **imperative** that community members, whether feeling ill or well, implement social distancing best practices to limit the spread and contraction of COVID-19. This means staying home and away from as many people as possible as often as possible.

If you experience symptoms such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath, do not present at a hospital emergency room or doctor's office immediately unless it is a true emergency. Please first call your primary care physician. If you do not have a primary care physician in place at this time, you may call DMH Medical Group at (217) 876-2856, Crossing Healthcare at (217) 877-9117 or SIU at (217) 872-3800. HSHS Medical Group Family Medicine Forsyth is operating a regional respiratory hub. Their hours are 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, and Saturday 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please call your primary care provider if you have any questions. Memorial Health System is operating a respiratory screening clinic at its DMH Express Care East location to screen people for the COVID-19 virus. The clinic at 4455 U.S. Route 36 East will operate seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. People coming to the respiratory clinic should call (217) 876-1200 before they arrive. Patients and visitors to healthcare facilities should be prepared to be screened before entering.

Daily PSA: What Does Sheltering in Place Mean and How Does It Affect

My Family, My Job, and Me?

With Governor Pritzker's Executive Order in Response to COVID-19 released yesterday, March 20, 2020, and going into effect today, March 21, 2020, at 5:00 p.m., many people have questions about what it means in relation to their own lives. As we hear of misconceptions and false information being

spread, we urge the public to gather information from reputable sources. Please review the following link that contains the Executive Order in its entirety:

<https://www2.illinois.gov/Documents/ExecOrders/2020/ExecutiveOrder-2020-10.pdf>

What Does It Mean to Flatten the Curve and How Does Sheltering in Place Help?

Many of us have heard the phrase “flatten the curve” in regards to COVID-19, but it might be hard to visualize what that looks like. Imagine firefighters receiving 100 calls about housefires in the community. Would it be easier for the firefighters to respond to those pleas for help as quickly and efficiently as possible, and to provide what is needed, if they took place over a six-month period or if they took place all in one day? Now replace firefighters with doctors, nurses, hospital staff and EMTs and housefires with hospital beds, ventilators, and other medical necessities. Managing 100 cases of an infection spread over a six-month period would allow medical staff to provide prompt and attentive care to those most in need in a much more effective manner. If those cases all came in on the same day, the medical system would be overwhelmed, resources would be scarce, and tough decisions would have to be made regarding the receipt of care. PLEASE take our words seriously, and display selflessness by staying home as often as possible unless it is absolutely necessary for you to leave.

Please Keep Sharing

Businesses, agencies, organizations and individuals are coming together and harmoniously working to address our local situation and the needs of our community members. We continue to gather information regarding new resources available to our community. Along with the primary care sites and respiratory screening clinics listed above, here is a list of some other resources that might be of benefit in the weeks and months to come.

The State of Illinois has released a new website dedicated to providing information surrounding the COVID-19 situation across the state. You can visit that site at coronavirus.illinois.gov.

Heritage Behavioral Health is providing crisis support to anyone experiencing increased anxiety and/or depression and anyone needing any additional support. Support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week by calling (217) 362-6262.

Central Illinois residents experiencing stress and anxiety related to the COVID-19 pandemic or other issues in their lives can call a free, emotional-support hotline operated by Memorial Behavioral Health. The hotline, (217) 588-5509, operated by trained mental-health professionals, will operate from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week, for the foreseeable future.

Memorial Health System announced it has made its MemorialNow virtual-care service free to anyone in central Illinois. The normal \$40 fee-per-virtual visit will be waived for the foreseeable future. New users can download the free MemorialNow app from the Apple Store or Google Play Store or by visiting MemorialNow.com and following written instructions. The service is open to any patient regardless of insurance status or whether the patient already uses a Memorial Health System doctor, nurse practitioner or physician assistant.

Memorial Health System has an online digital assistant to assess individuals for COVID-19 risk based on criteria from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The confidential digital assistant, named “AnneSarah,” will assess individuals’ risk and, if necessary, inform them on how to seek treatment. This online tool is another way to help the public determine their risk for COVID-19 while allowing them to stay safe in their own homes. To access the digital assistant, visit ChooseMemorial.org/COVID19.

Veterans experiencing mental stress/anxiety can call the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255; have confidential chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net; or text to 838255.

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For more information, please contact:

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