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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 25, 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, eleven tests have been completed in Macon County, with eight negative test results and three test results pending. Additionally, five Macon County residents have been tested outside of Macon County, with four negative test results and one test result pending. 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.

It is safe to assume that COVID-19 is in our community. 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: 24-Hour COVID-19 Hotline

To meet the needs of the Decatur community regarding COVID-19, HSHS St. Mary's Hospital has set up a 24-hour COVID-19 hotline to provide information on COVID-19. Community members can call (217) 464-2966 to speak to a medical professional regarding symptoms, when to seek care and other general questions. If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, we encourage you to reach out to your primary care provider before going to the hospital.

## **Mental Health Matters, Too.**

Over these last few weeks, we have been inundated with information about COVID-19 and how it affects our physical health, what signs and symptoms to look for in ourselves and those we care for, and what to do if we are concerned with this piece of our overall health. But what about our mental health? Some of us might notice fear and anxiety making its way into our days more so than ever before, and it can be overwhelming. How you respond to the outbreak can depend on your background, your unique personality traits, and the community in which you live. Below is some information from the National Alliance on Mental Illness that might help during these uncertain times:

- Remember that knowledge is power. Understanding the factors that affect a person's immune response to COVID-19 will matter as much as, or more than, understanding the virus! Poor lung health caused by smoking, lack of adequate health care, suppressed immune systems, and/or populations particularly susceptible to infectious diseases, such as the elderly, have been particularly affected by COVID-19.
- Don't accept everything you read or hear. Look beyond rhetoric and arm yourself with information. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides information and frequent updates on the COVID-19's spread, severity, risk assessment, etc. To subscribe to the CDC's email and text message service, visit CDC Subscription Service.
- Get your emotional support system in place: Maintain familiar routines in daily life as much as possible; take care of your basic needs and employ helpful coping strategies: rest during work or between shifts, eat healthy food and engage in physical activity. Stay connected with others and maintain your social networks by having the emails and phone numbers of close friends and family at your fingertips and staying connected via email, social media, video conference and telephone.
- Take control and incorporate preventative measures. Wash your hands. Avoid watching, reading or listening to news reports that cause you to feel anxious or distressed. A near-constant stream of news reports can cause anyone to feel anxious or distressed. Instead, seek CDC updates and practical guidelines at specific times during the day. Be supportive to others. Assisting others in their time of need can benefit the person receiving support as well as the helper.

### ***I'm quarantined or working from home – lonely and isolated even further – what can I do?***

- Normality and routine that mirrors life's daily patterns and practices can be helpful.
- We encourage you to create a structured, dedicated work environment and build in self-care as well as daily benchmarks of achievement. Structure and routine may be helpful for people with mental health vulnerabilities, especially during times of uncertainty.
- We encourage you to maintain a regular routine with the work hours that are usually worked, including keeping up with morning rituals. Dressing in regular work attire and taking regular breaks, including lunch time, may also be helpful.
- Research tells us that seven percent of communication is accomplished through our words, including email. 38 percent is voice and a staggering 55 percent is body language and visual. For people with mental health vulnerabilities, and even for those with extroverted personalities, the lack of face time can be challenging. Using technology to simulate this can offer a solution to bridging this gap. Be mindful of opportunities to integrate video into your conversations with colleagues. Consider using the video function on Skype or Teams for internal and external meetings.

### Resources to Help You

- 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.
- 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.

### **Please Keep Sharing: The Urgent Need for Blood Donations Continues**

*A Message from the Central Illinois Community Blood Center:* We are encouraging blood donations now and in the next 8 weeks to ensure adequate supplies during the Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19). We are working to prevent shortages locally. We are monitoring credible health agencies for updates on COVID-19 and are responding accordingly. For blood drive sponsor groups that are considering cancelling drives, please work with us on potential options to re-direct donors. There is no known risk to the safety of the nation's blood supply except for lack of donations and there are no reports of spread of this respiratory virus by blood transfusion. Giving blood is critical to ensure an adequate supply to meet patient needs. Learn more about how you can help by donating blood, time, or money by visiting their website at <https://www.bloodcenter.org/>; emailing [impact@mvrbc.org](mailto:impact@mvrbc.org); or calling (800) 747-5401.

The American Red Cross is facing a severe blood shortage due to an unprecedented number of blood drive cancellations during this coronavirus outbreak. Healthy individuals are needed to donate now to help patients counting on lifesaving blood. For an appointment, please visit [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767). Please also note that the American Red Cross Blood is hosting a blood drive every Tuesday from 12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. at Decatur's American Red Cross Chapter on 2674 N. Main St. in Decatur, IL.

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### **For more information, please contact:**

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