



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 22, 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, nine tests have been completed in Macon County, with seven negative test results and two pending results. These numbers reflect all people tested in Macon County, regardless of the county in which they reside, as our health systems and providers serve residents from various counties. 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: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Requests and Donations

During this unprecedented public health emergency, stocks of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for health care providers are being depleted rapidly. Health care personnel need to protect themselves when caring for patients by adhering to infection prevention and control practices, which includes having access to a sufficient supply of PPE. To aggressively address COVID-19, the

availability of critical resources such as PPE is essential, as it will limit exposing patients and staff to the SARSCoV-2 virus.

To maximize the State's availability of PPE, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) released guidance to hospitals and outpatient surgical and procedural centers on March 17, 2020 to limit nonessential adult elective surgery and medical and surgical procedures, including all dental procedures, until further notice. These considerations were requested to assist in limiting the consumption of vital health care resources during this public health emergency, particularly PPE.

IDPH is encouraging all outpatient surgical and procedural centers, ambulatory surgery centers, and veterinarians to donate their unused PPE that is not immediately needed to assist health care providers, health care facilities and first responders who are on the front line and actively responding to COVID-19.

Any type of health care PPE will be welcomed, especially surgical gloves, gowns, goggles, face shields, surgical masks and N-95 respirator masks.

IDPH and Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) officials are working to address needs locally and beyond.

To donate PPE, please contact: PPE.donations@illinois.gov

A message from Decatur Memorial Hospital regarding donations: So many of you have inquired about making homemade masks for our frontline healthcare workers - thank you! We are currently finalizing our process in cooperation with our community healthcare partners. We have to pay close attention to specifications & infection prevention. We hope to have information out to the public soon about how you can help us with this important need. Want to help? Fill out our donation form here: <http://mhs.social/bhWm50ySkde>

A message from HSHS St. Mary's Hospital regarding donations: Thank you so much for your willingness to help our hospitals and healthcare providers at this time! We are deeply grateful for the outpouring of messages and support we have received in regard to cloth face masks. We will be accepting homemade face masks but are working out donation logistics and will share information about how to donate them in the coming days. If you would like to donate PPE to HSHS St. Mary's Hospital, hospital staff is asking that you please call ahead of time at (217) 464-2966.

COVID-19 Scams

According to the CDC, there is currently no known treatment for COVID-19. People should be aware that any email, website, or person offering a 'cure' is a scam that should be avoided. We encourage Macon County residents to delete any email offer, and do not pay for any alleged COVID-19 'cure' or 'treatment.' We want residents to also be aware that, at this time, anyone going door-to-door offering COVID-19 testing is not legitimate and should be dismissed. We urge residents to instead follow the guidance of expert agencies such as the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or the World Health Organization, and report COVID-19 scams to the Attorney General's office.

We are also reminding people to exercise caution when donating to charitable causes connected to the COVID-19 outbreak. To help donors make informed giving decisions, the Attorney General offers the following tips: Do not donate if the solicitor uses high-pressure tactics, asks for payment in cash or insists on sending someone to pick up your donation. These are all hallmarks of a scam. If you receive an email or text message asking for a donation, confirm that the request is from the charity,

and not an imposter, by contacting the charity or visiting its website. Be cautious of “look-alike” websites. These fraudulent websites will often ask for personal financial information and may download harmful malware onto your computer. Don’t assume that charity recommendations on Facebook or social media are legitimate and have already been scrutinized. Research the charity yourself.

Please Keep Sharing: Agencies Continuing to Need Volunteers

A message from the United Way and the agencies seeking volunteers: “Agencies need volunteers under 59. We ask all volunteers 60 and over to take a break and stay well because we are going to need you when this all ends!”

To volunteer at the Good Samaritan Inn: Please contact Francie at (217) 429-1455 between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. If you don't get an answer, please try back, or simply drop by to see if help is needed. You can also schedule your volunteer time by email Francie at Volunteercoordinator.goodsam@gmail.com. Due to the shift in meal delivery, The Good Samaritan Inn is operating on reduced staff and hours. Your patience is truly appreciated.

To volunteer at Northeast Community Fund: Northeast asks that you go to their website, northeastcommunityfund.org and register through their volunteer portal. Once signed up, volunteers can schedule themselves online for one or two 2.5 hour shifts (9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays). Please select "food pantry" when self-scheduling.

For United Way of Decatur & Mid-Illinois: Please use the Get Connected: Volunteer in Mid-Illinois portal at https://volunteermidillinois.galaxydigital.com/agency/detail/?agency_id=111106.

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For more information, please contact:

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