

**MEMORANDUM**

Date: March 18, 2020

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To: Southside Coalition FQHCs and Clinic Partners

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From: Alina Moran, President  
Joe B. Kim, MD, Chief Medical Officer

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Subject: COVID-19 Update

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We want to keep you informed of activity underway at California Hospital Medical Center in light of the emergency response to COVID-19 (coronavirus). We know that there are many questions, some of which we cannot answer yet, and this lack of information is both frustrating and frightening. That said, there is much that we know and have learned from our Dignity Health hospital partners in the Pacific Northwest and Northern California.

At this time, there are no confirmed COVID-19 cases at California Hospital Medical Center, but we continue to prepare for this evolving situation based on guidelines from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Noted below are key clinical changes that have been implemented to date. We will send periodic updates when warranted.

**OUTPATIENT TESTING**

At this time, California Hospital Medical Center does not have the capacity to facilitate specimen collection for community patients on a large scale. However, this may change soon, and information will be provided as updates are available.

Here are the criteria for testing for ambulatory patients per the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH):

- Do not test asymptomatic patients
- Outpatients with mild symptoms may not need to be tested and can be provided Home Care.
- If testing is conducted, the patients may have their specimens collected in the physician's office using droplet precautions (and provided Home Isolation instructions). Those specimens should be sent to a commercial lab (such as Quest or Lab Corps) for processing.
- For a patient who is clinically ill, a clinical assessment should be done by their physician to rule out other potential respiratory illnesses. If appropriate, patients should be referred to Urgent Care or the Emergency Department for further clinical assessment and care.

**Please do not refer patients to the Emergency Department for COVID-19 testing only.**

## **PROCEDURAL SERVICES**

California Hospital Medical Center remains committed to providing superb care to those patients who need it. In response to the COVID-19 situation we are working with our surgeons to thoughtfully review all scheduled elective procedures with a plan to minimize or postpone electively scheduled operations, endoscopies, or other invasive procedures. We are already seeing deferrals initiated by patients, which has reduced demand to some extent.

## **HOSPITAL PREPAREDNESS**

Anticipating a potentially dramatic increase in COVID-19 related illness in the coming weeks, here are operational changes in effect today:

- Implementing standard screening for all patients, visitors, vendors, and employees who enter our hospital, and based on symptoms, are restricting access.
- Reducing the number of access points to our hospital in order to better track individuals coming and going.
- Screening all staff that are returning from high-risk countries and determining if they can return to work, or if they need to stay in self-quarantine.
- Cancelling all maternity tours, replaced by administrative staff providing education to pregnant patients via telephone and electronic messaging.
- Following and enforcing CDC guidelines regarding employee self-quarantine requirements.
- Retraining staff on proper personal equipment (PPE) use, and following the hospital's infection control policies on appropriate use with patients.
- Identifying sufficient locations within the hospital that we would use to isolate patients who have COVID-19, ensuring proper clinical care.
- Maintaining constant contact with our local fire and rescue, as well as numerous other community organizations that will look to us as the resource for clinical care.

We have been working tirelessly as we take on all aspects of this novel pandemic. We know that COVID-19 will test all of our systems and challenge our resolve. We are grateful for your continued partnership. If you have any clinically related questions or concerns, please reach out to any of us.

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