

Drive-thru testing now available

Written by William Madaras For the Sun
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Use your car to stop the spread

Rehoboth McKinley Christian Health Care Services is now offering drive-thru testing for COVID-19 at the hospital's ER entrance. This will help speed up the process of identifying those who believe they are infected and want to be tested. Any residents who believe they have symptoms are urged to make an appointment by calling (505) 236-1074.

As of this time, no cases have been reported by RMCHCS and no cases have been reported in Gallup or McKinley County. The hospital is also closely coordinating its plans with the New Mexico Department of Health, the Gallup Indian Medical Center-Indian Health Service and the Center for Disease Control.

"Our efforts are primarily focused on five specific areas," RMCHCS CEO David Conejo said. "Testing anyone showing symptoms, providing adequate care for infected residents, preparing hospital staff with infection control related practices, updating the community through our website and sharing information with local and state medical officials."

Plans by the hospital include weekly meetings to ensure adherence to state and national guidelines, monitoring of supplies such as personal protective equipment, respiratory equipment and masks for medical staff and patients suspected to have the virus, sanitation supplies for hand washing and normal hospital disinfectant solutions. There are also four respiratory airborne precaution isolation rooms at RMCH for people who contract COVID-19 to prevent their infections from spreading through the hospital.

The hospital Emergency Department will remain open 24/7 and will not close at any time. The entrance will be staffed by a screener who will ask brief COVID-19 screening questions of all patients, staff and visitors entering the facility. RMCHCS will only allow two adults over age 14 who have been screened by the hospital to visit patients. Those who are sick or have a weakened immune system are not allowed to enter the hospital. No visitors are allowed for adults in isolation. For children in isolation, one parent may remain with their child.

The hospital has also created a dedicated waiting area for those with respiratory symptoms in

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the emergency department and in its satellite clinics Red Rock, Urgent Care and College Clinic. The hospital urges those who believe they have COVID-19 to call ahead so it can plan a safe entrance that minimizes the exposure to others.

Dr. Christopher Gonzaga MD, FACP, an Infectious Disease Specialist, is the coordinator for the COVID-19 at RMCHCS. He says, “The abundance of caution being taken by the cancellation of conferences, travel services and public events is necessary in areas hit hardest by the virus.” He also notes that, “Currently, in the Gallup area, you shouldn’t curtail your everyday activities unless instructed by government or health officials.”

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