

Hiawatha Hospital provides COVID-19 update

Editors note--the following release was submitted by the Hiawatha Community Hospital on Monday, April 27

Hiawatha Community Hospital continues to monitor the coronavirus pandemic on a local, county, regional, state and national level. The leadership team continues to participate on COVID-19 calls with Kansas Hospital Association (KHA), Kansas Department Health and Environment (KDHE), American Hospital Association, Regional Preparedness calls and calls with our tertiary partners every week.

As of April 26, Hiawatha Community Hospital has had 284 calls to our COVID-19 Line. The CALL BEFORE YOU GO has been working very well to screen our patients. As part of our screening process, we have done 66 drive thru screenings. About 80% of the drive thru screenings have met the criteria to be sent for a COVID test. Between the drive thru screenings and the hospital, we have sent 62 Covid-19 samples for testing. The KDHE website states 63 tests in Brown County with No Positive Cases. To ensure the safety of our patients and staff, we have designated a separate wing in the hospital to utilize for suspected or confirmed COVID patients only. To date, we have used this COVID unit for 2 patients, both of which were ruled out for COVID after testing.

Recently, the KDHE expanded the symptoms and the criteria for doing the COVID-19 test. Last week, we saw an increase in calls and drive thru screening due to these expanded criteria. When we reviewed the updated criteria, we recognized that this would increase the number of calls and drive thru screenings.

Effective Monday, April 27, HCH will be offering drive thru screenings and physician visits in a mobile clinic located between the Hospital and former Dr. Searight Clinic in front of the West side Main Entrance. We will continue to screen all sick patients through CALL BEFORE YOU GO through our COVID Line. If patients meet the criteria for screening, they will be scheduled to come to the mobile clinic between 2:00 pm and 4:00 pm Monday through Friday.

The patients will have an office visit with one of our providers, who will be assessing the patient, and completing the screening tests. With the expanded symptom criteria for coronavirus, we will also see the patients in the mobile clinic. The providers and staff will have on personal protective equipment and the patients will be asked to come alone and wear a face covering.

Many hospitals have used the mobile clinic model during the pandemic. With the increased demand for screening in the area, we felt this was the best solution.

We continue to support the Governor's Stay at Home initiative. The hospital has seen a decreased patient volume during the pandemic and we are expecting a \$1,000,000 decrease in money coming into the hospital in April alone. We have been spending this time cross training our staff to work in other departments and training all staff on personal protective equipment.

We are following the roadmap to safely resume elective surgery after the COVID-19 pandemic, which was developed by American College of Surgeons, American Society of Anesthesiologists, Association of Perioperative Registered Nurses and American Hospital Association. We have implemented an Elective Surgery Review Committee with Dr. Rod Warren, Dr. Bigham, Dustin Williams, our anesthesia providers, and hospital leadership to discuss our strategy for resuming limited elective surgery and procedures that are low risk. The committee will meet each week to review the potential cases for the following week.

We appreciate everyone's' support during these challenging times. We have seen the benefit of social distancing and wearing face coverings!

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