

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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**Glendive
Medical
Center**

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Glendive Medical Center and Dawson County Health Department are Prepared

Glendive, Montana, April 2, 2020 – Dawson County Health Department (DCHD) and Glendive Medical Center (GMC) have plans in place in the event a positive COVID-19 case arises in Dawson County. As of now, there are no confirmed cases for coronavirus.

“We have been working very closely with the Health Department and Disaster & Emergency Services (DES) to prepare for a surge of COVID-19 cases,” stated MJ Marx, Director of Quality, “This includes thinking further ahead and learning from communities like Bozeman and Billings that are already in the midst of a large surge of cases.”

One of the first steps was establishing a Health Information Hotline. The hotline is staffed by GMC nurses who are available to answer questions and triage patients that have been experiencing respiratory symptoms. The hotline number is 345-8811 and is available 6am-9pm/7 days per week. GMC Urgent Care was set up strictly for respiratory illness and is locked to the public. Patients with appointments will need to ring the doorbell to enter for their scheduled appointment. If someone is having severe respiratory symptoms, including shortness of breath, they need to call 911 or the GMC Emergency Department directly at 406-345-3314, prior to coming in.

Entrances to GMC have been narrowed to the Main Entrance and ER entrance and starting Monday, all GMC staff will be wearing masks per new regulations. Patients and visitors can expect mandatory temperature checks and a symptom questionnaire. “We implemented this measure to add to the safety of our patients and staff,” stated MJ. Visitation is also restricted at this time to the following:

- You are the support person for an obstetric patient in labor. (Only 1 person allowed)
- You are a designated driver for a surgery patient. (Only 1 person allowed)
- The patient is a minor. (Only 1 parent/guardian allowed)
- The patient is physically unable to come alone. (Only 1 person allowed)
- You are an immediate family member of a patient that is in critical condition or end-of-life. (Only 2 people)

Any visitor that fits one of the above criteria must be healthy and may not display any signs of sore throat, chills, stuffy nose, fever, cough, aches, or headache.

The courthouse is closed to the public and DCHD is open by appointment only. They can be reached at 377-5213 for questions and appointments. At this time, they are keeping 0-24 month vaccines on schedule and any vaccination that may be needed, like a tetanus shot. They are also still conducting TB tests on Wednesdays and results are read on Fridays.

As of now, Gabert Clinic is open for appointments although providers and administration are working diligently to incorporate telehealth services. Nationwide, healthcare systems are using this convenient feature in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. Telehealth allows patients and providers to continue to conduct appointments while social distancing through phone or video. "We will be releasing an app that patients can download to their Smartphone that allows them to continue their healthcare without having to come in to the clinic", stated Angela Isaacson, Gabert Clinic Director of Nursing, "We will be advertising how to use this feature within the next week and encourage the public to take advantage of it during this time to help aid in spreading the virus." There are other helpful features with the app including allowing patients to communicate directly with their provider if they happen to be hospitalized. If patients are not comfortable with the option, they are always welcome to come in and see their healthcare provider.

Should a surge of COVID-19 cases happen, GMC, DCHD, and DES are ready. The public is asked to always call ahead and state if they have respiratory symptoms so staff can prepare for their arrival. We have had time to prepare the hospital for triage so patients who are positive for COVID-19 will not be in contact with patients hospitalized for other illnesses or injuries. "It is very important for the public to stay calm with a positive COVID-19 case," stated MJ, "We are ready and prepared to take care of our community. It is also important to keep in mind that we are in peak season for influenza and it can seem scary if your symptoms replicate those of coronavirus. We ask that the public contact our Health Information Hotline with questions and concerns to help ease fears."

Everyone can do their part to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses by following these prevention measures:

- Maintain six feet of distance from others.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or coughing into your elbow.
- Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose and mouth.
- Stay at home if you're sick.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces regularly, including countertops and sinks.

For relevant information from DPHHS, visit: <https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/cdepi/diseases/coronavirusmt>.
For up-to-date information about patient and visitor guidelines at GMC, please visit www.gmc.org/COVID-19

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