



News Release

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## **Reduced Directed Health Measures and Expanded CCH Services Go into Effect June 1**

For Immediate Release

**(COLUMBUS, Neb.)** – The state of Nebraska and Columbus Community Hospital (CCH) are about to enter a new phase of the COVID-19 situation. Starting on Monday, June 1, less restrictive directed health measures will take effect across the state. These measures will affect people’s gatherings, work and health care options.

### **Reduced Directed Health Measures**

One of the highlights of these new directed health measures that will go into effective June 1 is the lessening of travel restrictions. Now only people returning from international travel will be required to quarantine for 14 days upon their return to Nebraska.

All Nebraska counties except for Dakota, Hall, Hamilton and Merrick are now allowed to have general gatherings of the greater of 25 people or 25% rated occupancy of a space. Restaurants and bars may reopen at 50% of their capacity as long as there is no more than a maximum of six people per table. Likewise, gyms can serve up to 25 people or operate at 50% of their capacity.

Limited and non-contact team sports for both youth and adults can resume practices on June 1 with games to start on June 18. Contact sports like basketball, tackle football, soccer and wrestling remain prohibited. Salons, barber shops, massage therapy services and tattoo parlors will remain limited and both workers and patrons are still required to wear masks. Additional loosened restrictions for weddings, funerals and other gatherings were also introduced. For a full list of the new directed health measures, visit <http://dhhs.ne.gov>.

### **Expanded CCH Services**

On a local level, CCH will begin to offer some of the services it put on hold during the COVID-19 crisis such as elective surgeries, procedures, tests and therapies.

The reopening of these services will be handled with an abundance of caution to ensure the safety of CCH’s patients and staff. Throughout the reopening process, CCH will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation in the community, as well as the availability of health care resources, and make adjustments as needed.

To ensure the safety of its patients and staff, CCH will continue to do active employee screenings as well as screenings for people entering its facilities. Patients and visitors who come to CCH will be asked the following questions:

- Have you traveled internationally within the last 14 days?



- Have you had close contact (six feet for 10 minutes or more) with a confirmed case or a person under investigation for COVID-19 within the last 14 days?
- Have you tested positive for COVID-19 or are pending results of COVID-19 testing?
- Do you currently have a fever (>100.0F), chills, cough, sore throat or shortness of breath, headache, loss of taste or smell, vomiting and/or diarrhea?
- Have you taken any fever-reducing medication like Advil, Tylenol or Aleve in the last 12 hours?

Patients and visitors will also be required to wear a cloth face covering as part of CCH's ongoing universal mask policy.

#### **Available Health Care Resources**

CCH is in a position where it can expand its service offerings because it has the resources to respond to the COVID-19 situation in the community.

As of Friday, May 29, there were 1,181 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the East Central District Health Department (ECDHD) which includes Boone, Colfax, Nance and Platte County. Boone has 5 cases, Colfax has 613, Nance has 4 and Platte County has 560. On May 29, the ECDHD also released the following COVID-19 recovery statistics: Boone County has 3 recoveries, Colfax County has 577 recoveries, Nance County has 4 recoveries and Platte County has 512 recoveries.

CCH is currently caring for four COVID-19 positive patients in its Intensive Care Unit and Acute Care Unit, two persons of interest and one individual who is under contact isolation. Six of the hospital's negative air pressure rooms are in use.

Overall, the hospitalization rate for COVID-19 patients at CCH has remained steady over the past few weeks. CCH evaluates or treats about 5 to 10 patients a day for COVID-19. Many of these patients are treated in-house, while others are transferred to facilities in Lincoln or Omaha if they require services not available at CCH. Though the hospitalization rate for COVID-19 patients at CCH remains fairly low, patients who do require hospitalization may have a prolonged hospital stay. Many patients take days or weeks to recover.

In addition to treating patients with COVID-19, CCH continues to test for the virus. Thus far, CCH has collected 1,985 specimens: 1,255 of them have been negative and 618 have been positive. There are 112 specimens pending results.

People can access COVID-19 tests through CCH's Drive-Thru ED Screening and Assessment which will be available from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on June 1 and June 2 and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on June 3 to 6.

#### **Test Nebraska**

Additional testing opportunities are available through Test Nebraska, a new initiative created in partnership with state leaders and private corporations. Its goal is to dramatically increase the rate of COVID-19 testing to get a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation in Nebraska.

To get tested through Test Nebraska, people should visit [TestNebraska.com](https://TestNebraska.com) where they will complete an assessment to determine their risk. From there, testing will be made available for people who currently



have symptoms, have interacted with people who have already tested positive or have recently visited places where COVID-19 is widespread.

People who are prioritized for testing will receive an appointment to be tested at a drive-through Test Nebraska location. A Test Nebraska mobile site will be in Columbus this week. Additional details are not yet available. Test Nebraska drive-through locations can accommodate 3,000 tests a day.

Assessments are available in English and Spanish. For the assessment in English, use [www.testnebraska.com/en](http://www.testnebraska.com/en). For the assessment in Spanish, use <https://www.testnebraska.com/es>. For more information on Test Nebraska, visit [www.testnebraska.com](http://www.testnebraska.com).

### **Continue Practicing Safety Precautions**

As part of his announcement of less restrictive directed health measures, Gov. Pete Ricketts encouraged Nebraskans to continue to adhere to COVID-19 safety precautions. For example, Nebraskans are urged to practice the governor's Six Rules to Keep Nebraska Healthy:

- Stay home. No non-essential errands and no social gatherings. Respect the limits on groups of people.
- Socially distance your work. Work from home or use the six-foot rule as much as possible in the workplace.
- Shop alone. Do this only once a week and do not take your family with you.
- Help kids social distance. Play at home, no group sports and no playgrounds.
- Help seniors stay at home. This can be done by shopping for them. Do not visit long-term facilities.
- Exercise daily. Do your best to stay as healthy and safe as you can.

Since many people with COVID-19 lack symptoms or develop symptoms after they have already passed on the virus, people are encouraged to wear cloth face coverings when out in public, while still maintaining six feet of social distancing.

For more information on COVID-19, how you can reduce its spread or how CCH is handling the crisis in our community, visit the "Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information and Resources for Community Members" page on [www.columbushosp.org](http://www.columbushosp.org).

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