



Challis Area Health Center

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COVID-19 Public Statement

On March 13th, Governor Brad Little signed an emergency declaration to prevent the spread of coronavirus in Idaho. The main objective of the Governor's measure and other preparations are to protect vulnerable populations (i.e. elderly and health-compromised) and to preserve healthcare resources. The Challis Area Health Center, along with the North Custer Hospital District, share the Governor's objective to providing the best care possible to our local population throughout the duration of this national healthcare emergency.

The CAHC began preparing for the possibility of a pandemic last year when we participated in training exercises with Eastern Idaho Public Health. We have continued our preparedness work with EIPH by serving as active members of the EIPH Regional Healthcare Coalition. We also sponsored a local training facilitated by EIPH staff on March 11th which was attended by representatives from the Clinic, the EMS, the Custer County Sheriff's Office, the Coroner's Office and the School District. We also participated in several recent conference calls designed to keep providers in our entire region up to date on developments.

As the only Federally Qualified Health Center serving Central Idaho, we have also been working closely with our partners from the Idaho Primary Care Association. The IPCA is disseminating information and resources that the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is directing specifically to Health Centers to help us address the COVID-19 outbreak.

We have been working diligently to prepare to respond to the needs of our community during this challenging time. We share our residents' desire to have testing for COVID-19 widely available as soon as possible. For the time being, we are dealing with the same restrictions on availability of testing supplies and delays in processing that are affecting other healthcare facilities around Idaho and the rest of the country. As the national supply of testing materials grows and we receive more kits from Quest, our private reference lab, and from the State Bureau of Labs, we will let the community know about expanded testing opportunities.

Finally, we have implemented internal processes to meet the CDC standards of infection control and prevention. Patients who come to the clinic with symptoms of a respiratory illness will see signs posted with instructions on how to proceed in receiving treatment in the CAHC building. We will do our best to keep all of our patients safe while receiving care, whether it's for the COVID-19 virus or other medical needs. We are offering the option of a Virtual Visit through our Careline (208-879-1111) for those patients who would prefer to speak with a provider over the phone rather than come into the Clinic.

We are committed to keeping our community informed as this situation evolves and will provide updates as we have them.

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