



Community  
HealthCare System  
NE Kansas

# Reopening: A measured approach



## Our facilities

- Critical access hospital (Onaga and St. Marys)
- Seven family practice clinics in four counties
- Two nursing homes
- One assisted living
- Three fitness centers
- Home health



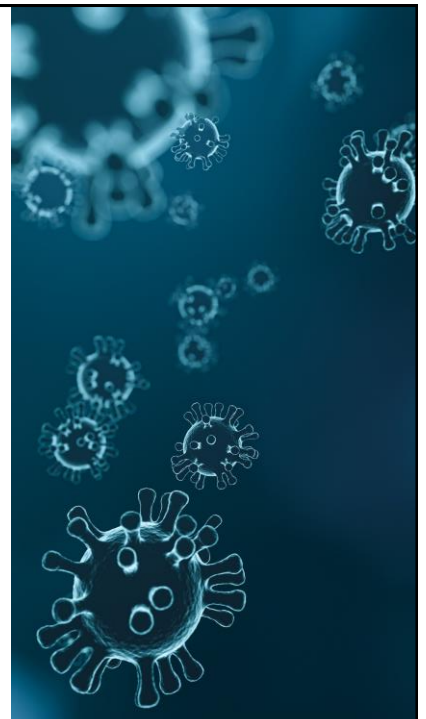
## “A measured approach”

“Unfortunately, we have no playbook for the COVID-19 pandemic. **We have adopted the philosophy that we will take a *measured approach*.** We will not overreact, nor will we jeopardize the safety and well-being of our patients, associates, and communities. Hospitals have chosen to react differently, and that’s fine, because **there is no *one right way to approach this public health emergency*.**”

—CEO Todd Willert, March 19 edition of the E-Connection,  
our internal newsletter

## COVID-19 Response Team

- **Anticipate** needs, guide organization
- **Facilitate** multidisciplinary communication
- **Solicit** medical staff input for guidance, support, validation
- **Meet** frequently
  - Twice weekly in March, April, first part of May; now once weekly
  - Smaller group meets daily for morning briefing



# Communication: External (public)

- Blog, newspapers, and social media
  - Facebook Live with medical staff
  - Radio call-in with Chief of Medical Staff
- Special joint print and radio ads with other hospitals
- Signs to direct patients and visitors
  - Update as necessary
  - Keep to a minimum and de-clutter periodically
- Letters to long-term care and assisted living residents and families



## CHCS resumes surgeries, other services May 4

April 30, 2020

Categories: [News](#)

Community HealthCare System is set to resume surgeries and wellness visits at its hospitals and clinics on May 4. Many restrictions and precautions will remain in place to protect patients and staff from COVID-19, but those who need care no longer need to wait. Like other healthcare facilities, Community HealthCare System, or CHCS, postponed non-emergency surgeries, yearly checkups, and other elective procedures when the statewide stay-at-home order was issued and the COVID-19 threat loomed...

[Read More](#) >

Tags: [coronavirus](#), [COVID-19](#), [preventive health](#), [surgery](#)



## We've missed you!

We've felt your support, but we've missed caring for you.

We're looking forward to returning to the full range of care you've counted on here in northeast Kansas, and we remain committed to providing a safe environment for our patients and employees. Some care can't wait—call your provider now for an appointment.




**Community HealthCare System, Inc.**  
Published by Sarah Caldwell Hancock (2) · April 30 · 🌐

Good news! We are set to resume surgeries, wellness visits, and other services on May 4. If you need care, you no longer need to wait!

We have many precautions and guidelines in place to protect our patients and associates at all of our clinics and hospitals. Please note that our hospitals will remain closed to visitors, as will our nursing homes and assisted living facility. Fitness centers will remain closed for now, too.

Find more information: <https://bit.ly/3d11m7C>

We'll share more updates as circumstances change.



**2,285** People Reached      **334** Engagements      [Boost Post](#)

34      4 Comments 12 Shares

 **Community HealthCare System** @chcsks · May 5

Dr. David Allen from our Holton Family Health Center will be on a live call-in show on the [#coronavirus](#) [#pandemic](#) Wednesday, May 6 from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. Tune in to Kanzaland Radio: KNZA 103.9 FM, KMZA 92.1 FM, or [mscnews.net](http://mscnews.net)



  1  1  



**Community HealthCare System, Inc.'s Video**

10 weeks ago · 2.1K Views

  37



Community HealthCare System  
NE Kansas

**Hospital personnel only  
beyond this point**



**Thank you!**

## Communication: Internal (employees)

- Daily communication and testing updates with medical staff and lead nurses
- E-Connection weekly newsletter
- Zoom meetings and Q&A with staff
- COVID-19 testing updates twice each week

## COVID-19 Update

WHAT OUR ASSOCIATES NEED TO KNOW

## Screening

- Maintained screening stations inside facilities
  - Patients instructed to call if displaying certain symptoms
  - Staff in PPE meets these patients outside
- Continued screening of all who enter hospitals and clinics
  - Screeners assigned through Labor Pool
  - Special training for screeners
- Continued daily screening of associates
- Temperature, travel/symptom questions, masks



## Surgery/elective procedures

- 50% capacity for first two weeks (starting May 4)
- Treat all surgery patients as if they have COVID-19
- As of June 1, testing all surgery patients for COVID-19 prior to procedure
- Using a working log on pending procedures
- Waiting area reconfigured to accommodate social distancing

## Clinics

- 50% capacity for first two weeks (starting May 4)
- Waiting areas accommodate social distancing
- Help patients feel safe
  - Separate areas in clinics for wellness visits and other non-PUI patients
  - Separate time frames for sick and well patients
- House calls and telemedicine provided as needed
- Clinic staff contacting patients who are past due for appointments
- Clinics evaluating community landscape; evening clinics haven't reopened



## Visitor policy

- No visitors March 14 through May 31
- Relaxed policy starting June 1 for non-COVID-19 patients
  - Visitors allowed one at a time; must be screened and masked
  - Must acknowledge guidelines
  - Pediatric patients allowed both parents; OB patients allowed one support person
  - Clinic patients allowed one support person who is screened; mask encouraged. Pediatric clinic patients allowed both parents.
  - Restricted access to certain areas of hospital
- Long-term care and assisted living following KDADS guidance

## Visitor guidelines

**Hospital patients are allowed one visitor at a time. Clinic patients are allowed one support person.**

- All hospital and clinic visitors and support persons must be screened
- Mask required in hospital or surgery area
- Pediatric patients are allowed both parents
- Hospital visiting hours are 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.



**Thank you for your cooperation!**

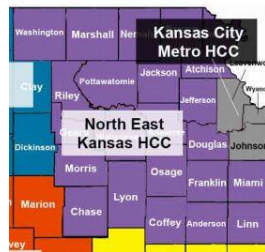
## PPE

- **Supply team**
  - Burn rate calculations
  - Track inventory with shared document
- **Conservation and reprocessing**
  - Training
  - Battelle
  - SteraMist
- **Community engagement**
  - Reusable gowns and homemade masks
  - Other supplies and donations



## Collaborations

- Pottawatomie County Emergency Operations Center
- Weekly CEO call with area hospitals
- Northeast Kansas Healthcare Coalition
- 3D printing of nasopharyngeal swabs with Kansas State University Carl R. Ice College of Engineering
- KU Care Collaborative





## Fitness Centers

- **Example of the measured approach**
  - Associates only at first
  - Restricted hours to protect therapy and rehab patients
- Asked how we can keep everyone safe
- Public access June 3
  - New screening and cleaning procedures
  - Restricted hours and access
  - Social distancing
  - No fans, no showering in facilities with locker room



## Lessons learned

- **Einstein: “In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity”**
- Reopening to “the next normal”
- Communication is crucial; address concerns and anxiety
- Flexibility and LEAN process improvement
  - Combine policies systemwide whenever possible
  - Example: screening continues to evolve

# Thank you

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*“To enrich the health and  
lives of the people we serve.”*



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