

Buffalo County Healthcare Coalition Plans Community-Wide Response to COVID-19 Patient Surge

For Immediate Release

(April 1, 2020) Health care experts estimate roughly 40 percent of the general population may contract the virus that causes COVID-19. And while the majority of those cases will be extremely mild, an estimated 5 percent may need hospitalization. In Buffalo County this amounts to approximately 1000 hospitalized patients over the course of the coming weeks/months.

To address this potential patient surge, members of the Buffalo County Healthcare Coalition have begun meeting routinely to share information, identify needs, direct resources, and discuss how to best care for patients during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Currently, there are about 267 licensed hospital beds available in Buffalo County. Both hospitals have plans to expand their current capacity to provide services for those who may need critical care. And clinics, which serve as the frontline in identifying patients and caring for those with mild to moderate symptoms, have put strategies into place to safely be part of a larger response if needed.

Family Practice Associates Physician Dr. Robert Messbarger stated during the coalition meeting, "Our community has always come together. If we see the need is in the hospitals, then we are going to pull resources from the clinics. We will be going wherever the resources are needed."

The University of Nebraska-Kearney and others, including Two Rivers Public Health and Buffalo County Emergency Management, are assisting the group with efforts to secure additional space and critical supplies such as surgical masks, N95 masks and ventilators from local, state and federal officials.

The group will continue to meet regularly and plans to share regular updates and resources through the Buffalo County Community Partners: bcchp.org/covid19 and [facebook.com/bcchp](https://www.facebook.com/bcchp).

Members of the coalition include: CHI Health Good Samaritan, Children's Physicians-Kearney, Family Practice Associates, First Care Medical, Heartland Surgery Center, Kearney Regional Medical Center, New West Sports Medicine & Orthopaedic Surgery, Platte Valley Medical Clinic, Buffalo County Community Partners, Buffalo County Emergency Management, Tri-Cities Medical Response System (TRIMRS), Two Rivers Public Health Department, University of Nebraska-Kearney, Horner Lieske McBride & Kuhl Funeral & Cremation Services, and O'Brien Straatmann Redinger Funeral Home.

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