COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Update, March 17, 2020

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

I wanted to share a brief update with the community on what efforts CHA has been making to protect our patients, visitors, staff and community. As COVID-19 has impacted our daily lives, and I want to assure you that staff and providers at CHA are working around the clock to respond to the changing environment. Below are a few key updates.

**Drive Thru Testing**
CHA plans to launch a drive-thru COVID-19 testing tent beginning on Wednesday, March 18. The service will be offered to CHA patients by appointment only from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., seven days a week, until further notice. This testing will be restricted to high-risk, symptomatic patients by appointment only. Patients are required to have a phone screening first with a nurse to determine if testing is appropriate. We hope to successfully expand drive-through testing by next week.

**Elective Surgery, Procedures and Appointments**
If patients have a non-urgent procedure or surgery coming up, our staff may call them to postpone their procedure. Please ask patients to call their provider's office with any questions.

**Routine Appointments**
CHA is rescheduling routine office visits that are not essential for immediate health. Each care team will make this determination for every patient and every visit. If a visit is not essential to have right away, patients will be offered a new appointment at a later date.

We are also working to offer appointments over the phone. We've started doing this on a limited basis but we will be able to offer more in the near future. Co-pays for appointments done by phone will be waived.

**Visiting Patients**
CHA is restricting patient visitors in our hospitals to protect the health and safety of patients, staff and family members.
Get Good Information
Make sure you get info from a trusted source. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has a Coronavirus Update page that offers reliable guidance. Massachusetts 211 has also been activated to provide support and answer questions about COVID-19. Finally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has a number of informative graphics. See the example above linked to the importance of social distancing.

We recognize that this is a stressful time for everyone. Each day our staff and providers are going above and beyond to care for our patients. I could not be prouder of their efforts. We appreciate your help as we do our best to respond to COVID-19. Please visit www.challiance.org or follow us on social media for more real-time updates.

As always, do not hesitate to contact me directly for more information or with other concerns.

Sincerely,

Mary Cassesso
Chief Community Officer
Cambridge Health Alliance