

DiGiovanna Family Health and Wellness Center

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To Our Patients:

We at the DiGiovanna Family Health and Wellness Center have been committed to the health and wellness of our patients and community since 1959. We remain committed to providing the best healthcare available mindful of the risks, benefits, alternatives and costs to our patients. During this period of unprecedented uncertainty, unimaginable stress on our healthcare resources and real-time access to information and misinformation through social media, television, emails and texts, the COVID-19 pandemic is testing our resolve as a worldwide family, as participants in our local communities, and the basis for our way of life. Because of these difficult times, very difficult decisions need to be made, old habits have to change and our community has to act together for the common good and well-being of our society and the people in it.

Along with our healthcare provider team, our office management and our office staff have been meeting on a regular basis, discussing every available strategy, and searching every reliable source of medical information so that we may move forward in continuing to provide medical care to our patients in the safest, most efficient manner while practicing all recommended strategies from our healthcare authorities, our elected officials, and the most reliable sources of medical information available to us. As such, we are immediately implementing strategies to minimize the risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus while continuing to provide medical services to our patients. All of these changes are subject to change depending on the changing dynamic of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Firstly, we will no longer be able to provide face to face medical visits for "sick" patients. These would be patients with fevers, cough, sore throat, chills, etc. We have had to do this to protect the health and safety of our staff so we can continue to provide needed medical services while not providing an avenue to spread the COVID-19 virus.. As of last Monday, we have set up a fully functional telehealth audio/video system wherein, working through our patient portal, our sick patients can communicate directly via video feed with one of our healthcare providers who can assess their symptoms, assess some vital signs, view pertinent physical examination findings, order tests and send prescriptions to the patient's pharmacy. Our office staff is fully trained and very patient at helping our patients access the patient portal, sign into the telehealth session, and follow up with any needed testing or prescriptions. Many office visits for prescription refills, wellness visits for review of test results, and rechecks can also be performed by the telehealth system, minimizing the numbers of patients presenting to the office.

Secondly, our office staff and healthcare providers have been equipped with personal protective equipment including masks, lab coats, face shields, respirators, gloves and gowns as necessary, to minimize the risk to our staff, providers and other patients. Please don't be alarmed if you do need to come into the office and see us all wearing this gear as we are doing it for your safety as well as our own.

Thirdly, we have significantly reduced our in-office staff. Our billers are now working from home so it may not be possible to discuss a billing issue for the next few weeks. Our research personnel are also working from home and will do their best to keep all study patients on time and stocked with their medications. We have reduced our front desk and medical assisting staff, as well as our clerical staff for medical record reproduction and filling out forms. Please bear with us through this very difficult measure with anticipated longer telephone hold times, longer times for prescription refills, and longer in-office wait times. We had to make this very difficult decision, again, to minimize exposure of our staff, healthcare providers and other patients to the COVID-19 virus. We do appreciate your patience and cooperation with us as we will do our very best to accommodate everyone who needs our help.

Lastly, we have reduced our in-office hours due to the necessity of reduced staff. We will open every day, Monday through Friday, at 8 AM. Will will close at 2 PM Monday through Thursday, and 12 PM on Fridays. We will not be open on Saturdays, but will have telehealth visits available from 8 AM until 2 PM. Please do not hesitate to contact our staff to discuss any of these changes.

From all of us at the DiGiovanna Family Health & Wellness Center, we appreciate our patients and our community. We wish you all good health and safety with reasonable concern but not fear. Listen to the health authorities and follow their advice. We will continue to provide you updates as we get them. Working together as a community of people, united in a common goal, consideration of each other and with a purposeful movement toward the health and well-being of our society and our way of life, together we can beat this crisis. We can all grow together, work together, and defeat the worst epidemic the world has ever seen. In the end, we will be stronger, more cohesive, and more resolute to make the world as safer place for us all.

Peace and good health to you all.

Sincerely,
Michael J. DiGiovanna D.O.