SGMC announces opening of COVID-19 screening station

South Georgia Medical Center announced today the opening of a drive thru COVID-19 Screening Station at its Smith Northview location at 4280 North Valdosta Road.

The drive thru COVID-19 Screening Station will allow members of the community to conveniently drive through a covered station and safely receive a free basic assessment of their symptoms by a healthcare professional while remaining in their vehicle. COVID-19 testing can be accessed during the drive thru if the assessment indicates further evaluation and testing is needed.

The drive thru COVID-19 screening will include an observation of the individuals health presentation, CDC recommended screening questions, heart rate, body temperature and oxygen saturation levels. In addition, preventive health information and CDC recommendations will be reviewed and made available.

According to Chief Executive Officer Ronald E. Dean, “we recognize that members of our community are deeply concerned about their well being and the well being of their family. We believe the drive thru COVID-19 Screening Station is a first step in creating access to more testing as federal authorities release more testing capability at the community hospital level.”

Tests are required to be sent to testing labs and testing kits remain in limited supply. Until more testing access is created, only those who require testing will be tested. Dean said “We simply want to help community members with decisions about their health and with COVID-19 concerns while positioning our communities health system to offer even more access to testing when it becomes readily available.”

SGMC is locating the center at the west side (left) of the Smith Northview Campus where a drive thru already exists. Entry to the screening station is from North Valdosta entrance. The process will open Monday at 1pm until 5pm, and then 8am-5pm Monday thru Friday with a goal of opening seven days a week until the COVID-19 community spread situation has subsided.

SGMC Smith Northview Campus outpatient center, urgent care, diagnostic services, and outpatient surgeries will continue normal operations.

“This COVID-19 screening station will allow us to safely determine which patients require specific COVID-19 laboratory testing and which patients do not,” said SGMC Chief Medical Officer Dr. Brian Dawson.

According to Dawson, “The screening protocols and the criteria to pursue COVID-19 specific laboratory testing are based on guidelines from the CDC in collaboration with the our partners from the state and local department of public health.”
SGMC recognizes that this is a new and innovative approach and asks the public to be patient until this service is fully developed. SGMC asks everyone to understand there could be long lines depending on demand but know the SGMC team will work diligently to satisfy everyone’s needs during operating hours.

Dawson says, “This screening station does not substitute for emergency care or an appropriate visit to your physician’s office.”

The Screening Station is part of a three pronged approach to assist the public in combatting the spread of COVID-19. The other initiatives include leveraging telehealth technology led by SGMC family medicine physician Dr. Kyle Adams, to deploy telehealth as an option for those who should not or cannot leave home for evaluation. An educational series will also be launched on social media, the SGMC website and through partnering with local media outlets to push useful information to the public.

For more information on SGMC’s efforts regarding COVID-19 visit sgmc.org. For the latest regarding COVID-19, visit cdc.gov.

Erika Bennett
Director of Marketing