

GOLDEN VALLEY HEALTH CENTERS IS ON THE FRONT LINES DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

MERCED, CA || As the number of cases continue to rise, community health centers are also on the front lines of the response to COVID-19. Golden Valley Health Centers (GVHC) fully supports the order to shelter in place; however, healthcare is an essential service and while many of their locations will stay open to serve their communities, some of their locations will be sick clinics and others will be well clinics which will be appointment based only. ALL patients will be screened at the front door of the Well clinics. If a patient has a fever or symptoms (symptoms including any of the following: cough, fever, shortness of breath) that patient will be sent home and his/her visit will be converted to a telephone visit or a sick clinic visit.

GVHC is committed to keeping everyone safe during the COVID-19 pandemic, and they are also now offering telephone medical visits. These visits allow patients to speak directly to a provider via telephone so a patient may get the care they need without leaving their home. Patients can ask questions or get advice, refill prescriptions for medicine and much more **Call 866.682.4842** to schedule your telephonic appointment.

GVHC has also established two drive-thru testing sites for coronavirus (COVID-19) for registered patients of GVHC. The drive-thru site began operation on Tuesday, March 17 and is open weekdays from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

Drive-thru testing for COVID-19 is beneficial for both patients and healthcare workers, ensuring social distancing and lessening the risk for transmission of the virus.

“This drive-thru testing site was established in close coordination with our medical staff, community partners, and our local clinics,” said Tony Weber, President and CEO of GVHC. “It is because of this strong partnership that we are able to offer our community a convenient and effective testing option that protects their safety, as well as the safety of our healthcare workers.”

At this time, patient testing is directed by the patient’s healthcare provider. Patients who are screened by their provider and deemed to need testing are referred to the GVHC drive-thru testing sites. With a referral from their provider, a sample is collected for testing.

“Because of the highly contagious nature of COVID-19, we ask that patients call ahead before seeking testing and treatment,” said Ellen Piernot, M.D., Chief Medical Officer of GVHC. “Over the phone, providers are able to assess a patient’s symptoms and, if deemed necessary, direct them to the drive-thru testing site. Once results are received, the patient’s provider will offer guidance on the best method of care.”

If individuals are experiencing severe symptoms—difficulty breathing, persistent pain or pressure in their chest, new confusion or inability to arouse, and/or bluish lips or face—they should seek medical attention immediately.

When a patient arrives to the drive-thru testing site, a trained healthcare worker in personal protective gear will swab for a sample. The sample is then packaged and transported to a medical laboratory in accordance with federal guidelines.

GVHC will also temporarily suspend nonessential or non-urgent dental care until further notice but they will offer emergency dental services at their Merced Dental and Turlock Main St. Dental locations:

Merced Dental
747 West Childs Ave
Merced, CA 95341

Turlock Main St. Dental
1200 West Main St.
Turlock, CA 95380

Their Merced Dental and Turlock Main Street Dental locations will remain open for qualifying emergencies such as:

- Fractured tooth due to trauma
- Infection and or Swelling
- Severe dental pain

Should you require emergency dental care and wish to speak to a dental representative and make an appointment **please call or text 866.682.4842.**

The best method of infection prevention is proper hygiene. To help prevent the spread of illness, individuals should wash their hands with soap and water often and for at least 20 seconds; stay home when sick; avoid touching their eyes, nose, or mouth; cover their cough or sneeze; and avoid close contact with others who are sick. In these unpredictable times, GVHC is here for you, working tirelessly to assure that your needs are resolved. We are all in this together and GVHC is committed to taking every step possible to minimize the potential spread of the virus. For inquiries or to schedule an appointment, **call or text 866.682.4842**

For the latest information on COVID-19 as it regards to GVHC and the communities we serve, visit <https://gvhc.org>

About Golden Valley Health Centers

Golden Valley Health Centers is a private, non-profit federally qualified health center system that has served California's Central Valley for over 48 years. GVHC is accredited by The Joint Commission and recognized as a Patient Centered Medical Home by the National Committee for Quality Assurance. GVHC provides comprehensive primary medical, dental, behavioral health, health education and eligibility screening to a diverse population across Merced, Stanislaus, and San Joaquin Counties. GVHC currently has over 42 health centers and counting. GVHC's mission is to improve the health of their patients by providing quality, primary health care services to people in the communities they serve regardless of language, financial or cultural barriers.

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