

SAN JUAN BASIN public health

Media Release

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Mercy Community Testing Site Reduces Hours, Tests

Durango, Colo.: Mercy Regional Medical Center (MRMC) will reduce hours and number of COVID-19 diagnostic tests available at its free community testing site as of Monday, July 27th. New hours and days will be Monday through Thursday 8am to noon, and Saturday 8am to noon, limited to no more than 50 tests a day.

Unfortunately, due to limited local availability of testing, and in addition to previously reported laboratory capacity and supply constraints around the state, San Juan Basin Public Health (SJBPH) and MRMC will need to temporarily prioritize use of this free public resource. This prioritization does not affect testing for COVID-19 for patients being hospitalized and refers only to the community testing operated by MRMC and supported by SJBPH.

SJBPH is requesting that individuals who live and work in La Plata and Archuleta counties refer to the following prioritization when considering if they should be tested at this free community testing site:

- **High priority:** people with COVID-19 symptoms **and** those notified of an exposure by SJBPH or another public health agency.
- **Medium priority:** people with no symptoms or identified exposure but who live or work with high risk populations such as:
 - Residents or employees of congregate living or work settings (dorms, long-term care facilities, detention facilities)
 - People experiencing homelessness
 - Employees of high-risk workplaces monitored by public health
 - Health care workers, first responders, and law enforcement

At this time, all others without a known exposure seeking assurance that they do not have the virus, including those instructed to get a test by an employer or educational facility and those testing for travel-related reasons, cannot be considered a priority for free community testing. Tests for these individuals remain available by appointment through private testing providers.

Unfortunately, the reduction in test availability at MRMC means La Plata County is unable to meet nationwide standards for testing capacity to most effectively control spread of infection. SJBPH is asking the community to prioritize the remaining capacity at the community testing site to ensure testing is

available for those who need it most and so SBPH can continue to use testing to identify positive cases and contain the spread of disease in a timely manner.

“We at SJBPH recognize that a reduction in community testing will be very concerning to all of us,” said Liane Jollon, SJBPH Executive Director. “SJBPH is already working with additional community healthcare partners to offer free testing and ensure that the community has access to diagnostic testing to rapidly investigate and control the spread of infection. We understand that businesses, schools and other activities cannot operate as safely as possible while Colorado and neighboring states continue to see rising cases without widespread testing availability,” she said.

“Testing with timely results is most important tool to contain disease,” added Jollon. Prioritization will ensure that testing and rapid results are available for people with symptoms and people suspected of exposure, enabling SJBPH to quickly identify cases and contain disease outbreaks. We continue to encourage anyone in the high-priority category to seek testing when developing symptoms or when notified of a likely exposure by a public health agency.”

For more information on COVID-19 testing locations and hours, see <https://sjbpublichealth.org/testing/>.

San Juan Basin Public Health is a local public health agency, governed by a seven-member local Board of Health, serving all residents of La Plata and Archuleta counties. For over 70 years, San Juan Basin Public Health has improved the health and environment of the Southwest Colorado community.

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