**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Media Contact: Ben Cornelius | ben.cornelius@bjc.org

March 20, 2020

**Boone Hospital Update on COVID-19 Response**

COLUMBIA, Mo. – As part of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Boone Hospital Center has implemented several new policies and procedures.

**Visitor Policy**

This is the current policy as of March 20. This is a very fluid situation and our visitor policy is subject to change at any time.

For the protection of our patients and team members, we have implemented the following visitor restrictions:

* Visitors who are experiencing signs of illness (fever, chills, cough, sore throat, headache, body aches) cannot visit until they return to health and are encouraged to call their primary care physician
* One visitor at a time in the building for each patient including:
  + Inpatient care units
  + Emergency departments
  + Intensive care units
  + Outpatient surgery and procedure areas
  + Medical offices and clinics
* Two visitors are permitted in obstetrics and pediatrics
* Visitors under the age of 16 years are not permitted, including siblings
* All visitors will be asked screening questions
* Follow hand hygiene and any other protection that is needed for the patient
* Additional restrictions may apply in certain high-risk areas such as cancer, transplant and where patients have compromised immune systems

All visitors to Boone Hospital Center will need to enter through our main entrance or the emergency department from 5 a.m.-9 p.m. and through the emergency department only from 9 p.m.-5 a.m.

**Elective Procedures**

After communication with local hospitals and guidance from BJC HealthCare, Boone Hospital Center has made the decision to stop elective procedures effective March 23. Elective procedures are defined as care that can be delayed 8 weeks or more without appreciable risk to patients or families, and without compromising the standard of care for known conditions. These actions are in line with the recommendations of the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the American College of Surgeons, the United States Surgeon General and other specialty organizations.

At this time, we will be evaluating care scheduled in the next 4 weeks. If the care falls within the category of an elective procedure or visit, it will be rescheduled 8 weeks out or more. We will continue to reevaluate this policy as the situation develops.

These actions are being undertaken to increase patient, employee and provider safety by:

1. Reducing potential COVID-19 exposures from pedestrian traffic in our facilities and supporting social distancing,
2. Ensuring appropriate utilization, informed application, and conservation of critical resources, such as medicines, blood products, protective equipment, hospital beds, and personnel, while
3. Meeting the emergent health needs of our communities during this time.

We expect that all decisions to delay or postpone encounters will be made in consideration of

1. The necessity and urgency of the intervention for the patient,
2. The health of the patient,
3. Concurrent risks of COVID-19 infection, and
4. The resource and staffing intensity associated with the particular procedure given constraints of resources during the epidemic.

Examples of care that will be suspended include:

* Scheduled elective or routine testing
* Screening exams
* Elective procedures
* Elective surgeries

Impacted patients will be called by either their physician’s office or Boone Hospital Center staff to reschedule.

For staff in areas that will be impacted by this change, we have instituted a labor pool to reassign staff when there are areas of need. We are also finalizing financial support for staff members in the event of furlough, quarantine, illness or family care needs related to COVID-19 exposure or other circumstances.

**Testing**

On March 18, Boone Hospital Center opened a drive-up collection site for COVID-19 testing. The drive-thru service is located just south of the emergency department entrance on the southwest side of the hospital. Patients should enter off of Anthony Street. (see map below)

* The drive-thru will be for patients with mild symptoms who have been assessed by a provider
* A physician order will be required.
* Patients will also need to present their drivers license and insurance card.
* There will be no out-of-pocket cost for this COVID-19 testing.
* Test results will be sent to the ordering provider
* Results will be communicated to the patient by their provider

Boone Hospital will be working with a local testing site to make results available within a day. The drive-thru site is open from 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday-Friday and 8 a.m.-Noon on Saturday and Sunday.



As of 3 p.m., Boone Hospital Center has tested 166 total patients, 94 in our drive-thru service. At this time, we have had zero patients test positive for COVID-19.

**If you feel as though you should be tested for COVID-19**

* If you have a regular primary care provider, please **call** their office to discuss your need for testing.
* If you do not have a primary care provider, please contact one of our two Convenient Care Clinics to be evaluated. Please **call** ahead to notify us of your symptoms.

Boone Convenient Care Locations and Contact information:

Boone Convenient Care Clinic Nifong Medical Plaza

900 West Nifong Boulevard, Suite 101

Open 8-5 Monday-Friday

573.815.6631

Boone Convenient Care Clinic Parkade Plaza

601 Business Loop 70 West, Parkade Center, Suite 275

Open 8-7 Monday-Friday and 9-5 Saturday-Sunday

573.874.0008

**Closures**

To further reduce potential COVID-19 exposures from pedestrian traffic in our facilities and supporting social distancing, we have closed the following services:

* Gift shop
* Pulmonary Rehabilitation
* Community and Medical Fitness Center

We have also implemented changes to our cafeteria and several of our waiting rooms in-line with current best practices.

Quote from Jim Sinek, President

*At Boone Hospital, our number one standard of excellence is to promote safety. Safety of our patients, our staff and our medical staff. I am incredibly proud of the work our team is doing, during this crisis, to uphold this standard at the highest level. We have had to make some difficult decisions regarding our visitor policy and the suspension of elective procedures. We have made those decisions fully understanding the inconveniences it will cause family members, friends and patients and our important role, as a health care leader, in protecting our people and communities while we successfully combat the COVID-19 virus.*

Quote from Monica Smith, Vice President of Patient Care Services and Chief Medical Officer

*This is an unprecedented situation that we are facing and it is changing drastically every day. We are working with area hospitals, the state and local health departments, BJC HealthCare and others to do everything we can to protect our staff and care for our patients.*

###

**About Boone Hospital Center**

Boone Hospital Center is a 392-bed full service hospital located in Columbia, Mo. It is a regional referral center located in the center of the state. The hospital provides progressive health care programs, services and technology to residents in 25 mid-Missouri counties. Boone Hospital Center was named the top hospital in mid-Missouri by U.S. News & World Report for 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 and is designated as a Magnet® Hospital for Nursing Excellence by the American Nurses Credentialing Center.