**PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT** March 18, 2020

Missouri continues to use strict criteria to ensure that only suspected cases are tested at the state lab at this time.  If a patient presents with signs/symptoms of respiratory illness, we will assess their risk factors, rule out other more common respiratory illnesses, and then in collaboration with a state epidemiologist, we will determine if they meet criteria to test, with the state epidemiologist having final say.  We have the compatible testing supplies, and specimens are sent to the state lab for preliminary testing, with confirmation then performed by the CDC.  As the testing process continues to improve, MDMC will evaluate additional testing avenues.

For additional questions on monitoring your health, please call your primary care provider or our State Department of Health Department. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services activated a statewide public hotline for citizens or providers needing guidance regarding COVID-19. The hotline can be reached at 877-435-8411. The hotline is being operated by medical professionals and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.  If you have any further questions or comments, please call or email me

According to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control), you should call your medical provider if you answer **YES** to any of the following questions:

* Have you traveled in the last 14 days outside the country or in the U.S. to an area with known COVID-19 (Coronavirus) outbreak?
* Have you been in close contact with a person with laboratory-confirmed or suspected COVID-19?
* Are you experiencing respiratory illness symptoms such as: fever, cough, shortness of breath or sore throat?

If you or someone you know is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or may have been exposed to a potential source of COVID-19, please call your healthcare provider or your nearest hospital emergency department **BEFORE** you arrive. You will be screened and the best course of assessment and treatment will be determined.