

Good morning from Scotland County Hospital in Memphis, MO and a heartfelt salute to our veterans today. Happy Veteran's Day! We thank you for your service to our country, and we cherish the freedoms in this country that you and many others have made possible. I'm Dr. Jeff Davis, one of the family physicians at Scotland County Hospital and Clinics. As many of you know, I've practiced here in Memphis since 2001 and have worked everywhere from the Emergency Department to the inpatient wing to the Women's Center, Surgery Center, Rural Health Clinics and Nursing Home. For the past several years, I've served as the Chief Medical Officer of Scotland County Hospital and medical director of the nursing homes here in Scotland County, Knox County & Clark County. I also serve as the medical director of the Clark County and Knox County Ambulance Districts.

The administration, doctors and nurses at Scotland County Hospital and Clinics would like to share some current and updated information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and its recent effects on our region. As many of you are aware, our local numbers of COVID cases are rapidly increasing due to sustained community transmission & the collateral effects of that are putting a serious burden on operations here at Scotland County Hospital. Due to COVID infections, COVID related symptoms, direct exposure and quarantine of employees and/or their children, and area schools transitioning to virtual learning; we are experiencing a significant increase in absenteeism leading to significant staffing shortages. These staffing shortages at not only our facility, but at other hospitals in our tri-state area have led to a significant reduction in this region's capability to provide for the large number of patients with moderate to severe COVID-19 disease.

Many emergency departments in our region, including our own, have had to transfer patients further and further away from home, not because they don't have enough beds in the hospital, but because our staffs have been depleted by COVID-19 infections, quarantines, child care issues, etc. This has put a significant strain on every doctor, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, nurse, receptionist, radiology tech, lab tech, maintenance worker, housekeeper, and business office personnel here at Scotland County Hospital. We are reaching out to our communities and asking for your help in slowing down COVID-19 and its effects on our healthcare systems. We want to be fully-staffed and fully-capable if and

when you may need us for anything from severe COVID-19 disease, a heart attack, a motor vehicle accident, a broken bone, a stroke, headache, back ache, urinary tract infection, to a brand new pregnancy. Our motto is “Caring for you when you need us.” And, our mission is to provide these services for you close to home. But, if many of our doctors, nurses, and other staff are absent because of the effects of local COVID-19 cases and their spread, we may not be at full capacity or have full tanks of fuel in our healthcare workers who are covering extra shifts over the past several months just to stay open.

Our medical staff and leadership’s recent concern has been the upcoming firearms deer season in Missouri and the influx of many out-of-state and out-of-area hunters into our region. Everyone is excited to have them converge on Missouri and stimulate our community’s economy while experiencing the excellent Northeastern Missouri habitat, but at what cost? And then, in just 2 short weeks, we will also be on the eve of our nation’s Thanksgiving holiday, a time-honored tradition where we all get together with our families in close quarters and share a meal and great fellowship together. Also, an exciting prospect. However, without proper precautions, this could be a Fall recipe for a significant worsening of our regional situation.

Here’s what you, our community, can do to help us:

- 1) Please consider limiting travel or visiting other locations where you may come into contact with COVID-19.
- 2) Please consider limiting gathering sizes at indoor activities and avoid multi-family events.
- 3) Please socially distance yourself from others in all activities that are possible to do so. This is 6 feet or greater away from one another.
- 4) Please wear a face covering that covers your nose and mouth effectively any time social distancing is not feasible.
- 5) Please stay home if you are ill with a fever, cough, sore throat, nasal congestion, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting. Don’t work, don’t travel, don’t go to

school, don't go to a sports practice or activity, don't attend a social event like a wedding, anniversary, birthday party or family gathering.

6) Please wash your hands with warm soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer after touching objects such as door knobs, light switches, hard surfaces, etc.

7) Please cough or sneeze into your elbow or a handkerchief and then wash hands appropriately.

8) Finally, if we all apply these common sense measures, we may not need to restrict business or education or community activities to effectively control the transmission of COVID-19. Therefore, businesses please lead our community by example by having employees practice these same recommendations. Have all employees wear masks, wash their hands frequently, stay home if sick, socially distance from one another and from patrons, and wipe down surfaces with viral killing cleaning products frequently.

If we all do our part, we can limit further rapid transmission of this virus. However, if we stick our head in the sand and do nothing, nature will take its course, and we will continue to see a surge in the cases and the collateral damage in our communities.

Thank you for your time, and if you have any questions that we can answer for you regarding your exposure or symptoms that you might believe are related to COVID-19, please call the Scotland County Hospital COVID Hotline at 660-956-6820.

Have a great day! And let's all do something to make a difference.