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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **TULSA HEALTH DEPARTMENT ACCESS TO SERVICES**

**TULSA, OK – [March 20, 2020]** – While responding to the current public health crisis, Tulsa Health Department officials have modified access to public health services to prevent community spread of the COVID-19 virus, while ensuring continuity of operations for essential services.

### **Clinics**

All clinical staff and other health care workers entering THD locations will be screened for symptoms of COVID-19. The COVID-19 mandatory screening is intended to provide additional safeguards for our clients, families and employees through decreased exposure to individuals who may have been exposed to the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

### **Clinic Triage Stations**

Beginning Monday, March 23, clients seeking entry at Central Regional Health Center, James O. Goodwin Health Center, North Regional Health and Wellness Center and the Sand Springs Health Center will be assessed for travel related risks or symptoms related to COVID-19.

Individuals will not be permitted entry if they:

- Have been diagnosed with, or have had direct contact within the past two weeks with anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19;
- Have apparent symptoms of COVID-19, such as fever, severe cough, or shortness of breath;
- Have been asked to self-quarantine by any doctor, hospital, board of health, or other medical provider or health agency, or who reside with anyone who has been asked to self-quarantine;
- Have travelled internationally or to endemic states in the last 14 days.

### **Scheduling Client Appointments for Clinical Services**

In an effort to ensure everyone's health and safety, clients scheduling appointments over the phone will be asked if they have symptoms related to COVID-19, such as fever, severe cough or shortness of breath. If the answer is "Yes", the client will be told to contact their primary care provider and an appointment will not be scheduled. Client appointments will be spaced out to limit the number of people in the waiting rooms.

### **Backfilling Prescriptions**

For clients that need to backfill prescriptions, THD staff will triage those clients over the phone and call in the prescription, so the client does not have to come to the clinic location for services.

### **Women, Infants and Children (WIC Supplemental Nutrition Program)**

The Coronavirus Response Act signed by the President March 18, 2020 had specific language in it concerning WIC. Included in the act was \$500 million for WIC, as caseload is expected to increase with the layoffs, closings and downward economic impact due to the virus. It also allows USDA to grant waivers to



streamline the program and increase flexibility during the current emergency/crisis. USDA has granted the following to Oklahoma WIC, including THD WIC Clinics:

- Physical presence requirement is waived through September 30th.
- Anthropometric measurements requirement is waived through September 30th.
- Bloodwork requirement is waived through September 30th.
- Nutrition Assessment Form will be reduced to identify basic need and will be utilized to complete phone certifications and re-certifications.

All WIC functions can now be performed over the phone. It is not necessary for participants to come into the clinic. Screening will be conducted at all WIC Sites for walk-in clients. Additional measures will be adopted as is necessary.

### **Birth and Death Certificates**

Effective March 19, 2020, THD in accordance with the Oklahoma State Department of Health, suspended lobby services for Vital Records until further notice. During this time, all Vital Records staff will remain on site to fill online, phone and mail requests. For more information on alternative options to order Vital Records, please visit: [vr.health.ok.gov](http://vr.health.ok.gov).

### **Food Protection Services**

Routine surveillance facility inspections are temporarily postponed. Sanitarians will continue to respond to complaints of unsafe food handling, foodborne illness outbreaks, natural disasters and requests for assistance from food industry partners. Routine inspections are only one way to manage food safety and quality in order to reduce the likelihood of foodborne illnesses. Inspections are not what cause quality controls to happen. Active Managerial Control practices and policies utilized by food establishment management teams also positively impact food safety-related behaviors and practices in retail food establishments. Inspectors will continue to partner with food establishments as they modify operational procedures, develop sanitation criteria, implement food processing controls and preventive controls that will reduce or eliminate food safety hazards.

### **Home Visitation Programs**

As of March 18, 2020, all home visitation programs were suspended until further notice. This does not include the services provided by the Directly Observed Therapy (DOT) Provider. DOT services are an essential function of public health to control and prevent the spread of tuberculosis (TB). The DOT provider will continue to follow the current process for DOT per the DOT guidelines with the following modifications. The additional required safeguards have been implemented by the DOT Provider to decrease the exposure to the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19. The DOT provider will:

- Contact each client prior to the scheduled visit to explain the modified DOT process.
- The DOT provider will wear the required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when delivering the prescribed medication to the patient.
- PPE will include the N100 face mask and gloves.
- The DOT provider will not enter into the client's home but will provide the medication to the client through the door and monitor the client swallowing the medication through the door.



## Cleaning Protocol

The THD Maintenance and Operations team has increased routine cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces and objects that are frequently touched. Frequent handwashing is strongly advised by staff and clients, and hand sanitizer is available throughout locations.

## Internal and External Meetings and Trainings

Most external events hosted by THD programs have been postponed or canceled. Visit our website or social media pages for continued updates. Meetings and trainings should not include more than 10 employees, and staff are advised to practice social distancing at work and in public gatherings. Staff are advised to utilize conference calls and virtual meetings instead of in-person meetings. All out-of-county travel has been suspended until further notice.

THD encourages all Tulsa County residents to stay informed with information from credible resources such as [THD](#), the [Oklahoma State Department of Health](#) (OSDH) and the [Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC). Call the Tulsa Health Department at 918-582-WELL (9355) during regular business hours or the Oklahoma COVID-19 Hotline at 877-215-8336 which is available 24/7. Spanish-speaking interpreters available.

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## Tulsa Health Department

Since its establishment in 1950, the Tulsa Health Department serves as the primary public health agency to more than 600,000 Tulsa County residents, including 13 municipalities and four unincorporated areas. The agency is one of two autonomous local health departments in Oklahoma, with statutory public health jurisdiction throughout Tulsa County and the City of Tulsa. THD's mission is to improve the health and well-being of all Tulsa County residents, in order to make Tulsa County the healthiest county in the country. THD was among the first health departments in the U.S. to receive national accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board. For more information, please visit [www.tulsa-health.org](http://www.tulsa-health.org).

