

Sawtooth Mountain Clinic Stresses Precautions Against Community Spread As It Reports Its Second Confirmed Covid-19 Employee Case

While moving forward with all normal operations, SMC urges all community members to follow recommended safety protocols

(GRAND MARAIS, MN - November 5, 2020) A second Sawtooth Mountain Clinic (SMC) staff member has tested positive for Covid-19. The SMC staff has conducted a robust case investigation and contact tracing. The results of this investigation show that any interactions with patients or other SMC staff were extremely brief and thus low-risk for COVID-19 transmission. In following the guidelines set by the Minnesota Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control, SMC stated there is no need for anyone to quarantine or be tested.

“Given the unfortunate circumstances we are facing daily across this nation during this pandemic of unprecedented proportions, we expected there would be more SMC staff positive cases,” said Kate Surbaugh, CEO of Sawtooth Mountain Clinic, “We have maintained vigilance with physical distancing, sanitization and proper use of personal protective equipment.”

Surbaugh continued, “By consistently following recommended protocols, SMC is able to continue to provide comprehensive health care services uninterrupted. SMC is currently open for all primary and preventative care visits and well as urgent visits. Telehealth visits with all providers are also available.”

“As previously cautioned by the Cook County Department of Health and Human Services, COVID-19 community spread is a significant challenge confronting the health of our community. SMC staff are members of the community and will be vulnerable to community spread of this virus - like all of us,” said SMC Board President Clare Shirley. “However, the robust safety precautions at Sawtooth Mountain Clinic are helping our staff and patients stay safe within the facility. SMC is acutely aware of what we need to do and how to adjust our operations accordingly. We will remain vigilant and ask the community to do the same.”

As day-to-day operations continue, there has not yet been any high-risk contact at SMC. If that happens, SMC will immediately contact those exposed and advise them

to quarantine per current public health guidance. SMC will defer to Cook County Health and Human Services to notify the public of new cases and the current status of COVID-19 in Cook County.

As case counts continue to increase across the both Cook County and across the state of Minnesota, SMC staff encourages all Cook County community members to continue to practice physical distancing, wear a mask, stay home if you are sick and practice hand hygiene. If you feel ill - even mildly so - please do not hesitate to call Sawtooth Mountain Clinic nurses at 218-387-2330.



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