



March 16, 2020

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the San Mateo County Health Officer is recommending all non-essential gatherings be canceled, postponed, or held remotely. In an abundance of caution, we are canceling non-essential, in-person meetings at all SMMC facilities until the Health Officer lifts the recommendation.

The majority of people who get COVID-19 are experiencing mild to moderate flu-like symptoms (cough, fever, shortness of breath). However, seniors and those with underlying health conditions such as diabetes or heart disease may experience more serious symptoms. Because COVID-19 is spread by exposure to droplets through coughing and sneezing, being in close contact with someone who has it puts others at risk for getting it. For this reason, we don't want to risk the safety of the community unnecessarily.

During this time, we have to modify our usual best practices and protocols for child and adult sexual abuse and assault. As soon as it is safe to do so, we will resume practice according to our existing county protocols.

Effective immediately, the following changes will be implemented:

- Forensic Interviews will be postponed
 - Forensic Interview Specialists will be available by phone for case consultation, discussion, and planning how best to speak with a child victim.
 - We are exploring the use of video technology to use for forensic interviews in the interim, as phone interviews would not be adequate.
 - Exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Non-acute medical exams for child sexual abuse will be postponed.
 - Keller Center medical providers will be available by phone for consultation with victims, their families, or medical providers.
 - Exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Acute medical exams for children and adults reporting a sexual assault will continue.
 - Patients and staff will be screened by the SMMC Emergency Department for wellness prior to the exam.
 - Adolescent (ages 13-17 years old) and adult patients will be cleared medically by Keller Center staff (business hours) and by the Emergency Department (after hours).
 - Child victims (ages 12 years old and younger) will be cleared medically by Keller Center staff (business hours) and by on-call pediatricians (after hours).





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- Forensic evidence collection and exam will be performed by Keller Center staff (business hours) and SANEs (after hours).
 - SANEs (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners) will notify Keller Center staff of all after-hours cases to facilitate follow-up of labs and medical care.
 - Rape Trauma Services (RTS) advocates will not respond in person during this time. Law enforcement and medical providers will make specific efforts to connect victims by phone to RTS. Exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
 - Victim Services Division (VSD) advocates will not respond in person to the Keller Center during this time. VSD is available by phone for information and support. Exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Keller Center phone lines will be monitored frequently during business hours (usually hourly). Please leave a message and a staff member will return your call promptly. If you need a staff member more urgently, please call the hospital operator at 650-573-3775 and ask to be connected.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we try to maintain a safe environment for our community.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to the Keller Center at 650-573-2623.