

Local healthcare facilities offer coronavirus testing

By Monica M. Walk

Several healthcare systems in this community are offering both ongoing and increased testing for coronavirus (COVID-19) as documented infection rates continue to rise.

Alivio Medical Center, with locations at 966 W. 21st St. and at 2355 S. Western Ave. as well as an urgent care facility at 6447 W. Cermak Road in Berwyn, IL, provides access to COVID-19 testing regardless of patient ability to pay, an integral part of Alivio's mission as a Federally Qualified Health Center.



Photo courtesy 25th Ward Office

Alivio Medical Center personnel are among many in the community performing coronavirus (COVID-19) testing.

"We are mandated to provide care to anyone who walks through the doors," said Alivio CEO Esther Corpuz, noting the Alivio centers provide a comprehensive range of healthcare, including dental, obstetrics, pediatrics, behavioral health, senior care, and surgery. "We provide care regardless of insurance, immigration status, and ability to pay. We take care of you—no questions...We are a safety net. Come to us. We can help figure out what you need—tests, medicine, doctors—after the COVID test."

Alivio staff expect COVID-19 testing hours to increase; for the most updated testing times and locations, check the website at www.aliviomedicalcenter.org. Corpuz expects testing to continue through winter.

At press time, Alivio COVID-19 testing is available first come, first served by drive-through, bike-through, or walk-up options (with social distancing for the outdoor testing) Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and Saturday 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. No appointment is needed. Alivio accepts insurance, but there is no charge for the uninsured. Nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and physicians—all wearing personal protective equipment (PPE)—perform the tests. Alivio staff are bicultural, with most able to speak more than one language, including Spanish and Chinese.

Alivio also offers antibody testing for individuals who can document exposure to a COVID-positive person. Having COVID-19 antibodies does not guarantee protection against recurring illness but does show that exposure has occurred, Corpuz noted. The organization is working to implement contact tracing.

Corpuz stressed the importance of annual flu vaccinations, especially as influenza season and the COVID-19 virus likely will overlap this year. Flu shots are free and available at all Alivio sites, generally beginning in mid-August.

Call (773) 254-1400.

University of Illinois Hospital and Health Sciences System (UI Health) also reports an

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anticipated increase of testing capability.

"We continue to operate our COVID-19 testing centers at two of our Mile Square Health Center sites, on the West Side and South Shore neighborhood," said UI Health Office of Public Affairs Spokesperson Jacqueline Carey. "We are in the process of procuring additional instrumentation to allow us to expand our testing capacity."

COVID-19 testing at UI Health occurs at no cost to patients. Uninsured patients will not be charged; insured patients can expect their insurance company to cover COVID-19 testing at 100%.

To see all UI Health testing locations and how to access them, visit <https://hospital.uillinois.edu/primary-and-specialty-care/infectious-diseases/covid-19-coronavirus/testing-and-triage>.

Those wishing to schedule an appointment must call the nurse triage line at (866) 600-2273.

UI Health COVID-19 testing sites are located at: Mile Square Health Center-Main, 1220 S. Wood St., Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Pilsen Family Health Center Lower West, 1713 S. Ashland Ave., Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Mile Square Health Center-South Shore, 7037 S. Stony Island Ave. (call for South Shore's hours after approval from nurse triage).

Emergency walk-in testing for individuals with symptoms (coughing, shortness of breath, fever) is available at University of Illinois Hospital's emergency department, 1740 W. Taylor St., between 11 am and 11 p.m.

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has developed a COVID-19 rapid-result saliva test, which officials are ramping up for use beyond the Urbana campus.

University of Chicago's UChicago Medicine curbside COVID-19 testing location on the Hyde Park campus at 5841 S. Maryland Ave. is open to the public by appointment. Call (773) 702-2800 for screening and scheduling appointments. MyChart virtual screening also is available. UChicago testing focuses on those experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.

Get locations and instructions online at www.uchicagomedicine.org/patients-visitors/patient-information/coronavirus-information/coronavirus-patient-education.

Clinic testing hours are Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. UChicago Medicine management notes on its website that patients will not be expected to pay out of pocket for COVID-19 testing, nor will UChicago bill them for COVID-related services provided; however, it still requires insurance information for processing.

Cedar Crosse Research Center, 800 S. Wells St., Suite M-15, is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Staff speak English and Spanish. Insurance or payments accepted. Call the center's COVID Hotline at (312) 431-6780.

Clear Wellness Group, 1605 S. Michigan Ave., Unit 1, is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Anyone can get tested, and the group has same day appointments available to test for COVID infection as well as antibodies from prior COVID infection. Staff speak English, Spanish, and Gujarati. Call the group's COVID Hotline at (312) 535-5770 or log on to www.clearwellnessgroup.com.

Cook County Stroger Hospital did not respond with testing information. Its website mentions hospital procedures for COVID-19 but does not list COVID-19 testing information: <https://cookcountyhealth.org/locations/john-h-stroger-jr-hospital-of-cook-county/>. County officials recommend finding testing sites by logging on to dph.illinois.gov/covid19/covid-19-testing-sites.

Physicians Immediate Care Chicago West Loop, 600 W. Adams St., is open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and offers curbside exams to determine if testing is appropriate. Staff speak English and Spanish. COVID Hotline is (312) 767-0400.

Rush University Medical Center, 1620 W. Harrison St., offers an online COVID-19 self-assessment form, on-demand video visit provider, wellness tips, and testing. Call (888) 352-RUSH (7874) or log on to www.rush.edu/patients-visitors/coronavirus-covid-19-information-and-resources.

St. Anthony Hospital, 2875 W. 19th St., is open for testing from 9 a.m. to midnight, Monday through Friday. Appointments required. English and Spanish offered. COVID Hotline is (773) 484-4000. Log on to <https://sahchicago.org/>.

Mercy Hospital and Medical Center reported no information to share on COVID-19 testing. Its website notes changes and restrictions for hospitalized patients and provides an online screening tool at www.mercy-chicago.org/.

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