

Dr. Crosby

Regarding the Hattiesburg Clinic and Forrest General's outpatient response to COVID-19. "We have a systematic approach." We had our first COVID case on March 13 and 5 days later (March 18) we had the Cough and Fever Clinic up and running with measures taken to protect our employees from safety glass installation in reception areas, appropriate spacing of patients, adequate PPE, signage, police officers for security, etc. Patients are given paperwork to complete and wait in their car until called. A few days later we added Curbside COVID where patients register online and provide all the required information that MSDH needs to track these cases. They are given a time slot and wait in a holding area until asked to pull up to a slot for testing. The average time from arriving to leaving is about 5 minutes for Curbside. Everyone seen inside gets an O2 sat, as tests are now more available most get a swab and CBC (early on most also has a flu test and mycoplasma test). Asymptomatic healthcare workers can return to work with a mask – the rest are being advised to self-isolate following their test in order to wait for results.

We have tested 2263 people, have 219 pending and have 174 positives. Thursday (4/9), Crosby said there were 23 positive tests. Crosby is calling all the positive tests personally and handling all follow ups. Crosby said the most alarming thing is that of 23 people he called yesterday to tell them they tested positive, several were AT WORK and NOT self-isolating.

Drs. Crosby and Batson have worked out a treatment plan with all positive cases. The workflow of testing and treatment protocols literally change almost day to day based on testing availability from various labs and any new research. He says 9-11 days after symptom onset is when "things get bad." He said you can't go with "how someone feels" because they often may not feel all that bad but their O2 sats may be in the mid 80's and they are crashing. "then they die 10 days later." A patient with 78% O2 reported feeling okay and wanted to drive himself to the hospital (he had driven to the clinic by himself) but rapidly decompensated at the hospital and died a few days later. Crosby is having his nurse call patients to get a baseline for how long they can hold their breath or have them monitor their pulse ox. Anything below 95% (this is so different that what we do in any other disease) triggers home health and a delivery of oxygen to the patient's home. Anything below 90% goes to the ER.

USM has produced a viral medium and is starting to do testing. They are also doing 3-D printing of masks. Using mostly reusable gowns, N95 masks treated at FGH every couple of days and are reused.

Crosby himself has been working 20-hour days. He has been on call 24/7. He takes 3 showers a day. Morning, upon getting home, and again after infrared sauna. This virus is killed by 130-150 degree temperatures. Some advocate using a hair dryer up the nose (he has not done that yet).

The Cough and Fever Clinic is keeping many of these patients out of the ER. Forrest General Emergency Room saw 14 patients in the ER all day (yesterday).

Crosby said the Cough and Fever Clinic is NOT seeing much flu at all but a fair amount of mycoplasma.

All positive patients with any serious symptoms or comorbidities are given a COVID Care pack with gloves, masks, goggles, soap, a thermometer, a pulse oximeter and supplements (melatonin 6mg, Vitamin C 1000 mg, Vitamin D3 1000-3000 IU, and Zinc)

Regarding those noted to be sicker but not needing hospitalization, along with O2 and noted supplement, treatment with hydroxychloroquine 400mg bid day #1, 200mg bid for next 4 days along with either Zithromax or doxycycline is evaluated on a case by case basis keeping in mind potential cardiac rhythm issues with both hydroxychloroquine and Zithromax. A baseline EKG (focused on QT interval taking in differences between patients based on age and gender), BMP, LFTs and magnesium levels are obtained.

Cough and Fever Clinic is seeing a 9-10% positive rate of tests administered.