PRESS ADVISORY

For Immediate Release
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Think You Need COVID 19 Test? Call First

Dr. Art Rodriguez, City of Brownsville – Health Director, clarified how to go about requesting a COVID 19 test.

Testing must be obtained through your doctor or another qualified health care provider. The public is strongly encouraged to call their doctor or public health agency to ensure that they meet the screening criteria for testing.

"Call First," said Dr. Art Rodriguez, "Not everybody with a cough needs a test. If you do need a test, health professionals want to know you are coming."

Calling first allows healthcare professionals to pre-screen you and determine whether you need a COVID 19 test or are likely suffering from another form of respiratory infection or allergies.

Calling first allows your health care provider to take the necessary steps to protect themselves, their staff, and other patients from exposure to COVID 19 if it is determined that you need to be tested. This helps slow the spread of the virus and helps to protect our doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals from becoming ill.

COVID 19 Testing is being performed by both private and public testing labs. However, a medical professional must first determine your eligibility for a test, and then order one.

The city's testing protocol is for both insured and uninsured individuals is described below.

COVID-19 TESTING

Testing for the coronavirus (COVID 19) virus will only be conducted on doctor's (or other qualified health care provider's) orders.

Please follow the instructions below if you are displaying COVID 19-like symptoms, or believe you have been otherwise exposed to an individual with COVID 19.

COVID-19 symptoms are mild to severe respiratory illness <u>with</u> symptoms of:

- o   Fever
- o   Cough
- o   Shortness of breath

If you are experiencing a medical emergency, which may include difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, or bluish lips or face, call 911.

FOR INDIVIDUALS <u>WITH</u> HEALTH INSURANCE

People experiencing COVID 19-like symptoms should contact their healthcare provider or telemedicine provider to discuss COVID 19 testing.

Do not go directly to your doctor, urgent care center or emergency room for COVID 19 without instructions from your doctor or the healthcare facility.

If you are unable to reach a provider, call the COVID 19 Hotline at 956-247- 3650 or 211 for guidance.

FOR INDIVIDUALS <u>WITHOUT</u> HEALTH INSURANCE

[The Cameron County Health Department](#) has launched a COVID- 19 hotline staffed to help Cameron County residents with COVID 19 information.

People experiencing COVID 19-like symptoms who are uninsured and do not have an established doctor can call the county's COVID-19 Hotline at 956-247- 3650 for guidance. Also, they can 211 if they would prefer to contact the Department of State Health Services.

The phones are answered 24 hours per day.

Do <u>not</u> go directly to a healthcare provider for testing unless you are directed to do so by the hotline or have been ordered to do so by another healthcare or government professional.

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