**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CENTRAL DISTRICT WORKING WITH HEALTH CLINICS TO PREVENT COVID-19 VIRAL SPREAD**

Several cases of COVID-19 have been identified by clinics in our district. “We continue to have strong collaboration with our district health clinics in addressing COVID-19,” states Anderson. CDHD Health Director. Clinics are taking additional measures to prevent the spread of the virus in our community. They have implemented a number of evidence-based practices designed to minimize the chance of exposure and identify staff early on who may have contracted the virus. These include scheduling changes that separate patients from each other, limiting visitors into facilities, asking patients to call ahead for screening, daily temperature and symptom checks of all staff, and proper use of masks.

Healthcare staff are the front line with patients well or sick, placing them at high risk for exposure to COVID-19. Therefore, healthcare staff are advised to be alert to onset of symptoms and to stay home if sick. Clinics can test staff who develop symptoms in order to keep spread of the virus to a minimum. Because the virus can be spread by individuals who have no symptoms, they can be carriers of the virus and unintentionally spread the virus to others.

Dr. Libby Crockett, a physician at the Grand Island Clinic explains, “We have been vigilant in developing and implementing strategies to help protect our staff and our patients. Because of the screening strategies we have employed, we were able to identify several healthcare workers with only mild symptoms that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19.” Once these healthcare workers are identified, CDHD begins the follow-up contact investigation. This investigation provides information that can prevent the spread of the virus. It also gives CDHD staff the opportunity to advise on restricted health measures as appropriate within the healthcare facilities and community.

This effort is a prime example of how our community works together to reduce the negative impact of COVID-19 in our community. According to Dr. Crockett, “The Grand Island Clinic will continue to work with our health department, patients and community to slow the spread of this virus. We want to model to the community the importance of social distancing, staying home from work if you are ill, and following the recommendations from the Central District Health Department.”