

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 7, 2018

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HEALTH SERVICES' CLINIC INTRODUCES LIVER SCREENINGS

ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO – The largest organ in the body, the liver performs hundreds of functions to keep the body healthy, such as aiding digestion, cleansing the blood and storing nutrients for energy. Exposure to chronic disease, viruses, drugs, and other risk factors can damage liver function and cause short- and long-term health issues. To help individuals conveniently determine their liver function numbers, St. Charles County's Division of Health Services now offers specific blood screenings through its clinic.

"The liver plays such an important role in our body that it's important to know if it is functioning properly," says Division of Health Services Director Sara Evers. "The Division of Health Services introduces these convenient blood screening opportunities to help individuals know their numbers and determine if further assessment is required. In cooperation with vaccination, knowing one's health status will reduce infections and further the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's goal of eliminating hepatitis in the United States."

The new blood tests will screen for:

- **Hepatitis A** – Hepatitis A is spread when a person ingests objects, food or drinks contaminated by the virus or through close contact with an infected individual. The best way to prevent infection is through vaccination, but post-exposure treatment is successful. Unvaccinated individuals who may have been exposed to hepatitis A should get tested within two weeks to begin treatment and avoid severe illness.
- **Hepatitis B** – Hepatitis B virus is spread by sharing bodily fluids from an infected individual or from a mother to her child during birth, and the infection may be either short- (acute) or long-term (chronic). A series of vaccinations can prevent Hepatitis B, but there is no medication available to treat the infection once it occurs. Several types of tests are available to determine: if a person has been exposed to the virus; if a person was successfully vaccinated against the infection or if they've recovered from an acute infection and cannot get Hepatitis B again; or if the person can easily spread the virus to others.
- **Hepatitis C** – Hepatitis C is spread when blood from an infected individual enters the body of someone who is not infected. There is no vaccination available to prevent Hepatitis C, but infected individuals can undergo treatment to manage and clear the virus from the body.
- **Blood Protein and Blood Enzyme Levels** – A screen for the level of liver proteins and enzymes can help medical professionals determine proper body function. High or low levels of these proteins or enzymes in the blood can mean that damage or disease to the liver or other organs has occurred.

Located at 1650 Boones Lick Road in St. Charles, the Health Services' Clinic offers these tests and other services between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday by appointment. For more information on the new services available, please call 636-949-7319 or visit www.sccmo.org/chronicdisease.

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“These screenings are helpful for everyone to use as a baseline for future examinations, but they are especially recommended for Baby Boomers, pregnant women and newborns, current or former injection drug users, those who have unprotected sex, those who received blood transfusions or organ transplants before 1992, and those in the health care or public safety industries,” says Samantha VanNatta, Communicable Disease Program Manager. “We aim to make our services convenient for our clients, which is why we do not require a doctor’s prescription and set our screenings at an affordable price. Another added convenience we provide is the availability of our rapid screening for Hepatitis C, which will return results to the client within a few minutes of the blood draw.”

The liver screening services through the Division of Health Services are payable by cash, check and credit card (includes a service fee) or through individual health insurance plans. Following is the fee schedule for the tests:

Test/Service	Cost
Hepatitis C rapid testing	\$30
Hepatitis B core IgM	\$10
Hepatitis B antigen	\$5
Hepatitis B antibody	\$10
Hepatitis A IgM	\$15
Albumin level	\$5
Bilirubin direct	\$5
Total Bilirubin	\$5
Total protein level	\$5
Alkaline Phosphate (ALP) enzyme level	\$5
Aspartate Aminotransferase (AST) enzyme level	\$5
Alanine Aminotransferase (ALT) enzyme level	\$5
Blood draw fee (per visit)	\$10

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About the St. Charles County Department of Public Health

Through the efforts of its three divisions — Environmental Health and Protection, Health Services and Humane Services — the St. Charles County Department of Public Health provides a wide range of services that enhance the well-being of the community. To learn how the department assists this region or to find out about volunteer opportunities with any of the divisions, visit www.sccmo.org/PublicHealth or call 636-949-7400.

The mission of St. Charles County’s Division of Health Services is to promote healthy choices and improve the health of the community. To achieve these goals, program services include an Immunization Clinic for children and adults; nutrition education and supplemental food services for women, infants and children; chronic disease screening and prevention; Communicable Disease reporting and investigation; educational programming; the collection and distribution of birth and death certificates; assistance in applications for U.S. passports; and much more. For information on programs offered and to discover ways the division assists the community, visit <http://www.sccmo.org/HealthServices> or call 636-949-7400.