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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

# **CID Unveils Health Screening Program *Partnership with Mercy Medical Center***

### **For Immediate Release**

July 9, 2020

**Cedar Rapids/Iowa City** – The Eastern Iowa Airport – CID has unveiled a new health screening program that airport officials believe will serve as a guide for the national conversation on health screenings at airports. CID intends to partner with Mercy Medical Center – Cedar Rapids to deliver this first-of-its-kind program.

On Thursday morning at a special commission meeting, Cedar Rapids Airport Commissioners heard details of the plan, presented by CID Director Marty Lenss and Dr. Timothy Sagers, COVID-19 clinical director, Mercy Medical Center.

Lenss says the Travel Well program began to take shape in late March, a few weeks after the declaration of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Following multiple reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as well as state and local health officials about the global nature of the virus and the need to restrict travel, testing and health screening options became a regular part of the national and global discussion.

CID plans to implement this year-long program as a proof of concept – to provide robust and efficient screenings, conducted by Mercy Medical Center professionals. This pre-flight health screening would be required for all passengers departing on a flight out of CID as well as employees who work beyond the security checkpoint, called the sterile area.

Lenss says national travel surveys and CID survey information overwhelmingly show passengers would like to see health screening at airports.

“Our survey conducted by Vernon Research Group showed at least 75 percent of those who responded said they would feel somewhat more comfortable to much more comfortable with temperature checks either at the airport entrance or at the screening checkpoint,” he says.

Other local survey information showed corporate travel managers responded favorably to a health screening and temperature check by a medical professional, indicating it would make them feel safer about having employees travel.

Lenss says what makes the Travel Well program different from others being discussed is that the health screening will be conducted by medical professionals and it consists of more than a temperature check.

“The Travel Well program will provide an efficient approach to screening passengers and employees,” Lenss says. Mercy established these protocols at their hospital and clinics as part of its COVID-19 response to ensure the safety of its staff and patients.”

The screening will consist of a few standard health-related questions and a temperature check prior to reaching security. The screening is expected to take about 10 seconds per person. Those who do not have a temperature, or a recent positive COVID-19 exposure, will move onto the TSA screening checkpoint. Those who have a temperature above 100.4 degrees F and/or a recent COVID-19 exposure, will be directed to secondary screening in a private room. From there, Mercy’s health care professional will help determine the health issue causing the high temperature, such as an unrelated infection.

“We’re pleased to be partnering with the Eastern Iowa Airport on this screening initiative, which could assist other communities as they work to make air travel even safer, said Dr. Sagers. “We’ve seen that travelers around the country may be apprehensive about air travel. Our aim in this partnership is to provide further assurance that those who fly are as safe as possible.”

The program is also in line with recommendations from the recently released federal guidance, “Runway to Recovery: The United States Framework for Airlines and Airports to Mitigate the Public Health Risks of Coronavirus Guidance,” jointly issued on July 2, 2020 by the U.S. Departments of Transportation, Homeland Security and Health and Human Services.

Airlines for America (A4A), a leading airline advocacy organization, has come out publicly in favor of health screening to be conducted by the Federal Transportation Security Administration (TSA). TSA says no decision has been made regarding specific health screening measures at airports.

Lenss says the Travel Well program does not diminish those efforts but would enhance the dialogue.

“This was not designed to replace the need for a national solution,” Lenss says. “We absolutely agree there needs to be a national protocol put into place. We believe the Travel Well program can provide valuable information and data that can be used to help inform the national strategy.”

In the event the need for such screening is no longer needed, the process could be dismantled, and the requirement lifted. The program will be funded through a portion of the \$22.8 million CARES fund grant that CID was awarded earlier this year. Cost estimates are still being finalized.

**A public hearing to provide people the opportunity to comment and share feedback about the program will be held from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 16 in the ballroom at the Hotel at Kirkwood Center, 7725 Kirkwood Blvd. SW. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, a maximum of 40 people will be able to participate in person. Remote participation will be available via Zoom. To participate via Zoom, we request that you pre-register in order for us to ensure all have access to the meeting.**

**To register in advance for this meeting via Zoom, here is the link:**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0pf-GgqzwtGdFXviufqPNk3y2b5YEs2r5t>

**After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.**

**For those who plan to participate in person, we request that you pre-register by emailing [PIO@flyCID.com](mailto:PIO@flyCID.com) or email or call Pam Hinman, director of marketing and communications, at [P.Hinman@FlyCID.com](mailto:P.Hinman@FlyCID.com) or 319.731.5719.**

**In addition, people may provide written feedback by email to [PIO@flyCID.com](mailto:PIO@flyCID.com) or by mailing comments to:**

**Airport Director  
Re: CID Travel Well**

**Eastern Iowa Airport – CID**  
**2515 Arthur Collins Pkwy SW**  
**Cedar Rapids, IA 52404**

Final approval of the program is slated for the regular Airport Commission meeting at 7:30 a.m. July 27.

For additional information about the Travel Well Program, go to: <https://flycid.com/phs>

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**About The Eastern Iowa Airport – CID**

CID has non-stop service to 15 destinations on five airlines: *Allegiant*: Las Vegas (LAS), Nashville, (BNA), Orlando Sanford (SFB), Phoenix/Mesa (AZA), Punta Gorda/Ft. Meyers (PGD), St. Pete/Tampa (PIE), seasonal service to Los Angeles (LAX); *American Airlines*: Charlotte (CLT), Chicago (ORD) and Dallas/Ft. Worth (DFW); *Delta*: Atlanta (ATL), Detroit (DTW), Minneapolis (MSP); *Frontier Airlines*: Denver (DEN); *United Airlines*: Chicago (ORD) and Denver (DEN)

Three air cargo carriers serve CID: FedEx, DHL and UPS

For more information, go to [FlyCID.com](http://FlyCID.com).

**About Mercy Cedar Rapids**

*Mercy Cedar Rapids is a Catholic healthcare system serving patients and families in eastern Iowa. In addition to Mercy Medical Center (its fully accredited, 424-licensed-bed hospital in downtown Cedar Rapids, Iowa), the system has an established network of specialty clinics, including MercyCare primary and urgent care clinics located throughout Cedar Rapids and surrounding communities. IBM Watson Health™ has named Mercy Medical Center among the nation's 100 Top Hospitals based on clinical, operational, financial and patient satisfaction data. Founded in 1900 by the Sisters of Mercy, Mercy remains dedicated to its mission of caring for the sick and enhancing the health of the communities it serves. For more information, log on to [www.mercycare.org](http://www.mercycare.org), or follow Mercy on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or YouTube.*