

# COVID-19 & Health Equity: The Impact of the Virus on AFC's Patient Community



It's been a month since we last shared an [update](#) on Arlington Free Clinic's work during the COVID-19 crisis.

Most of our patients lost their jobs in the early days of the crisis. They are universally struggling with food, transportation, and other essential needs. Few will benefit from federal support. Those who become infected with COVID-19 are at great risk of poor outcomes due to existing health conditions such as cancer and heart disease. Our patients will still be reeling from the negative effects of COVID-19 long after the rest of us have "returned to normal."

**This crisis highlights the inequities in stark terms; consider the barriers of:**

- inability to utilize drive-through testing sites for those who do not own a car
- reduced bus schedules
- fear of exposing themselves or their children while visiting the food bank
- lack of internet access, and in turn, up-to-date and accurate information
- challenges isolating sick family members in crowded apartments

**AFC will continue to champion health equity in the community and ensure needs are met. We are:**

- working with the county and Virginia Hospital Center (VHC) to secure a South Arlington walk-up testing site
- accepting brand new uninsured patients diagnosed with COVID-19 upon referral from VHC
- having great success referring patients for stays in a local hotel arranged by the county for purposes of isolating sick family members in crowded living situations

**By continuing to provide services during this time, AFC's impact cascades beyond our 1,600 patients and into their homes, workplaces, neighborhoods, and children's lives.**

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