

Cedar Rapids airport health screenings yet to keep any passenger from flight

More than a month ago, the airport started the 'Travel Well' screening program to detect passengers infected with COVID-19.

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CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa (KCRG) - The Eastern Iowa Airport says its passenger screening procedures have been effective and well-received.

More than a month ago, the airport started the '[Travel Well](#)' screening program to detect passengers infected with COVID-19.

In that time, Mercy medical staff have completed 30,000 screenings. The airport lost roughly 53% of their passengers in 2020 when compared to 2019, so the airport hoped passengers would see the screening program as a step forward in the travel industry.

And so far, the airport says its been successful. In an airport survey, 96% of passengers recommended flying out of the Eastern Iowa Airport because of the added health screening. The airport partnered with Mercy Medical Center to start the program.

Before passengers go through security, they'll first go through a primary screening.

This includes a temperature check with a nurse from Mercy, who will then ask about a passenger's symptoms and if they've had exposure to the virus. If passengers do not pass the primary screening, they go to a secondary screening with a Mercy nurse or a doctor.

The airport says the screening has not blocked any passengers from flying during its first four weeks. Pam Hinman with the Eastern Iowa Airport says so far no antigen tests have needed to be performed.

"We have heard from airline employees where there are passengers who come out, they check in, but then they realize they're going to have to go through a health screening. Then they admit look I've got a fever, look I don't feel well and then they ask to get rebooked," said Communications and Marketing Director for Eastern Iowa Airport, Pam Hinman.

Out of 30,000 screenings, only 12 people have been sent to the secondary screening. If a person goes through a secondary screening and staff can't find an accountable condition, a rapid antigen test is available at no extra cost to the passenger.

She says in the coming weeks, the airport is looking at adding rapid antigen testing for any passenger who wants one, but it would be separate from the Travel Well program.

”We would find a location in here pre-security and that the passenger would have to pay for because that would be separate from the Travel Well program,” said Hinman.

In a recent airport survey, 60% of respondents say they feel more comfortable traveling after going through the health screening.

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