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For Immediate Release

Friday, February 10, 2017

## **Hospitals Temporarily Restricting Visitors to Limit Spread of Flu**

In light of the high number of influenza cases in the Rock River Region, OSF Saint Anthony Medical Center, Mercyhealth, and SwedishAmerican Health System, are restricting the age of **visitors** to their facilities per recommendations from Illinois Department of Public Health and the Winnebago County Health Department.

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Winnebago County Health Department (WCHD) recommends that hospitals implement the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) comprehensive influenza prevention and control recommendations during times of increased incidence of influenza-like-illness in the community.

Effective immediately, and until further notice, hospital visitors will be limited to those individuals 18 years of age and older. In addition, it is strongly recommended that anyone showing flu-like symptoms please refrain from visiting patients in the hospital. All treatment services are still available to all patients.

The health department and the hospital systems remind everyone that if you haven't had your flu shot, it's not too late to get vaccinated, and to practice proper hygiene by covering coughs, cleaning hands often, and staying home when sick.

Symptoms of flu include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting as well. Make decisions about when to seek medical care as you would under normal circumstances. It is not necessary to seek medical attention if you have mild symptoms for which you would not ordinarily seek medical care.

### **Patients' Recommendations:**

**Ask for a mask.** Wear a mask if you have flu or cold symptoms, as a patient.

**Wash your hands.** Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.

**Cover your coughs and sneezes.** Use a tissue or your upper sleeve.

### **Additional Information**

Influenza information – health facts sheets, handouts and resources tools

Centers of Disease Control ([CDC](http://www.cdc.gov))

Health and Human Services ([Flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov))

Winnebago County Health Department ([WCHD](http://www.wchd.org))

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