FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 13, 2020

Update: Due to the patient population and through recommendation from the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC), visitor restrictions for McCreedy Home, WCHC’s long term care unit have been escalated. The CDC has recommended that nursing homes institute aggressive visitor restrictions even before COVID-19 is identified in a community or facility. At this time, McCreedy Home is not accepting any visitors. Family members or friends are welcome to reach residents via phone, text, video call, or email.

WCHC Implements Visitor Restrictions & Responds to Coronavirus Concerns

Effective immediately, Washington County Hospital and Clinics (WCHC) has implemented visitor restrictions at the hospital and McCreedy Home due to the rise in reported influenza-like illnesses. Though limiting visitors at this time is due to increased seasonal flu and cold activity, this preventive measure also serves to address concerns of the Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19).

To protect patients, family members, and staff, WCHC asks that individuals with any symptoms including cough, runny/stuffy nose, fever, sore throat, diarrhea, or vomiting refrain from visiting. We also ask visitors to adhere to the following:

- Patient visitors are limited to immediate family
- Children under the age of 18 should not visit the hospital or McCreedy Home
- If you have recently had any flu-like symptoms, you must postpone your visit until you have been symptom free for more than 24 hours

WCHC is committed to protecting its patients, residents, employees, and volunteers and limiting the impact of viral illness in our community. While the immediate concern is to diminish elevated influenza activity, WCHC continues to monitor the developing situation of COVID-19. WCHC’s Infection Prevention Nurse, along with other key leaders, are monitoring updated information daily from the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). All WCHC facilities are prepared to identify and appropriately direct patients to the correct place to receive care.

For those individuals experiencing cough, fever, or shortness of breath and that have recently traveled or had contact with an individual confirmed to have Novel Coronavirus 2019 WCHC advises to call ahead first before presenting to the clinic or emergency room. Specific protocols are in place to identify and evaluate patients who may have contracted the new coronavirus. If you feel sick, do not panic, the flu or cold is still the most likely cause. Patients should contact their local clinic provider office for advice. A triage nurse will ask a number of questions to
assist in determining the best approach for the patient to be seen or treated and patients will be advised as needed. Calling ahead helps staff direct you to the most appropriate care and take precautions to protect patients, employees and our community.

WCHC encourages everyone to assist in limiting the spread of disease. Remember to cough and/or sneeze into your arm or shoulder or use a tissue. The spread of germs can be reduced by coughing into your clothing. Avoid covering your mouth with your hands, as the germs can easily be passed through direct contact with surfaces or people. Frequently wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. If you are sick, stay home for at least 24 hours after you are symptom free.


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