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## **Area Hospitals to Implement Visitor Restrictions to Limit Spread of Respiratory Infections**

### *Precautionary Measures Taken to Limit Seasonal Flu*

**(DAYTON, OH)** – The Greater Dayton Area Hospital (GDAHA) announced today that area adult, short-term acute care hospitals will implement visitation restrictions beginning December 29, 2017 in an effort to minimize the spread of respiratory infections to hospital patients, employees and the community.

Due to the early and increased local presence of the seasonal flu virus, the region's hospitals have opted to implement precautionary measures in order to best protect the health of their respective patients. The Dayton region has seen a 192% increase of reported flu cases since December 2, 2017 and over a 61% increase in just the last week.

The visitor restriction policy for area **adult\*** acute care hospitals are:

- No visitation by anyone who is ill with any respiratory symptoms including coughing, fever, chills, headache, vomiting, sore throat, muscle aches or diarrhea.
- No visitation by anyone under the age of 14.

“We respectfully ask the public to follow these new guidelines during flu season, which lasts through March 2018,” said Bryan Bucklew, President & CEO of GDAHA. “The seasonal restrictions include not permitting children under the age of 14 in the hospital for visitation purposes or anyone who exhibits flu or cold symptoms,” he said.

Bucklew indicated that the GDAHA Infection Control Committee will continue to meet weekly to review reported flu cases and flu-related hospitalizations to see if visitor restriction recommendations should be changed or modified.

“Children are particularly likely to carry viruses since they are heavily exposed in the school setting and with the guidelines we hope to minimize exposure in the hospital,” Bucklew said.

***\*Due to the unique nature of treating pediatric patients, these visitor restrictions are not applicable to Dayton Children's***

The exception is if a parent is bringing a child to the hospital for tests or therapy, or to visit a doctor. There are medical necessities where treatment is important and the visitation restrictions do not apply to children or adults in need of services.

“The action of restricting visitors exhibiting respiratory symptoms, including a fever, coughing and sneezing, and children under the age of 14 is a precautionary measure,” Bucklew continued. “Flu season has started and hospitals want to ensure they can keep unnecessary contamination away from patients whose immune systems are compromised. It is also important to help keep nurses and other patient care employees healthy so that they can take care of the patients,” she added.

There are also exceptions for severe circumstances.

“The visitation restrictions are being implemented with the utmost sensitivity and respect to patients and their families,” Bucklew explained. “Doctors, nurses and other hospital personnel will work with patients on a case-by-case basis to ensure that patients receive the support needed, especially if there is a situation where end of life may be a concern.”

***GDAHA and its member hospitals have committed resources to protect patients and employees from respiratory infections, which includes the seasonal flu virus. GDAHA works closely with area health departments and member hospitals on these types of health issues.***

***For more information on flu prevention and treatment, visit [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov).***

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