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OCTOBER 1, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hospitals Implement Visitor Restrictions to Limit Spread of Respiratory Infections

Precautionary Measures Taken by Hospitals to Limit Seasonal Flu and H1N1

Dayton area hospitals will implement visitation restrictions on October 5, 2009 in an effort to minimize the spread of respiratory infections to hospital patients and employees. Due to an increase in patients with flu-like symptoms, as well as the local presence of the seasonal flu virus and the H1N1 virus, the region's hospitals have opted to implement precautionary measures in order to protect hospital patients and employees.

GDAHA hospitals will implement the following visitation restrictions on October 5, 2009 as precautionary measures:

- **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 age 14 even if they have received the seasonal flu vaccine or receive the H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available.**

Hospitals may institute more restrictive visitation policies if they serve specific patient populations such as pediatric, burn, transplant or ICU patients. Hospitals will implement visitation restrictions with the utmost sensitivity and respect to patients and their families. Hospital employees will work with patients on a case-by-case basis to ensure that patients receive the support needed to assist them throughout the continuum of care.

Area hospitals have committed a number of resources to protect patients and employees from respiratory infections, including the seasonal flu virus and the H1N1 virus. Hospitals have also purchased supplies and personal protective equipment such as N95 respiratory masks, supplies for powered air purifying respiratory systems, and hand sanitizing stations to protect patients and employees from respiratory infections. Hospitals will provide both seasonal and H1N1 flu vaccines (when it becomes available) to hospital staff.

“The action of restricting visitors exhibiting respiratory symptoms, including a fever or cough, and children under the age of fourteen is a precautionary measure,” said Bryan Bucklew, President & CEO of the Greater Dayton Area Hospital Association. “Flu season is starting earlier this year and hospitals want to ensure they can keep patients and employees safe from respiratory infections, including the seasonal flu virus and H1N1 virus, in order to provide the highest quality of healthcare available in the region,” he said.

To keep from spreading respiratory infections, including the seasonal flu and the H1N1 virus, to others, GDAHA member hospitals and Public Health – Dayton & Montgomery County recommend careful hand-washing, coughing and sneezing into a sleeve or a tissue, and staying home from work or school for at least 24 hours after an individual is fever free.

If an individual exhibits symptoms of a respiratory infection, including the seasonal flu virus or the H1N1 virus, the best course of action is to stay home in order to prevent the spread of germs that may make others ill. If flu-like symptoms worsen to include a high fever, coughing up heavy mucous or blood, signs of dehydration, trouble breathing, or worsening of pre-existing medical conditions, individuals should seek a medical evaluation from their primary care physician. Individuals are discouraged from seeking medical attention for flu-like symptoms in emergency departments since they provide the necessary services to treat acute or life-threatening medical issues.

For more information on flu prevention, visit www.flu.gov.

The Greater Dayton Area Hospital Association (GDAHA) is a member-service organization representing 21 hospitals and health systems in the Greater Dayton Area. GDAHA collaborates with its members to improve the delivery of healthcare services in the region. GDAHA offers value-added services that help members improve operating efficiency and maintain quality standards.

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