

The following news advisory is being distributed by the Kent County Health Department on behalf of Spectrum Health, Metro Health – University of Michigan Health, Mercy Health, Mary Free Bed and Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services.

Contacts:

Beth Cranson
Spectrum Health
616.540.0813

elizabeth.cranson@spectrum-health.org

Angela Klinske
Mercy Health
616.260.5101

klinskea@mercyhealth.com

Jennifer Hoff
Metro Health – University of Michigan Health
616.252.5033

Jennifer.Hoff@metrogr.org

Betsy Musolf
Mary Free Bed
616.366.2027

betsy.musolf@maryfreebed.com

Colleen Cullison
Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services
616.258.7511

colleen.cullison@pinerest.org

Steve Kelso
Kent County Health Department
616.632.7274

steve.kelso@kentcountymi.gov

Kent County Area Hospitals Enhancing Healthy Visitor Efforts

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., January 17, 2018 – Grand Rapids area hospitals are working to meet the challenge of caring for our community during this CDC-declared flu epidemic. One of the most important tools in fighting the transmission of flu is limiting exposure.

The flu can be especially dangerous to the young, frail or elderly. For the safety of patients and staff, Spectrum Health, Mercy Health, Metro Health – University of Michigan Health, Mary Free Bed and Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services are limiting visitation to their hospitals. In addition, they are asking patients to limit the number of people who accompany them to office and clinic visits.

Visitors are asked to respect the following restrictions:

- If you are ill or have been exposed to someone who is ill, please refrain from visiting the hospital
- All visitors are expected to be healthy and the hospitals are taking active steps to protect patients, staff and visitors. A healthy visitor is someone who does not have the following symptoms:
 - Fever, greater than 100.4 F
 - Cough
 - Sore throat
 - Runny nose or congestion
 - Vomiting or diarrhea

- Rash or draining sores
- Only healthy visitors should visit patients in the hospitals or outpatient clinics
- Hospitals strongly recommend only two visitors or family members visit a patient at a time in order to limit exposure to patients, visitors and family members

These conditions apply to visitors at all Grand Rapids area hospitals and at all Spectrum Health hospitals outside of Grand Rapids and are effective until further notice. These measures are designed to protect vulnerable patients.

To avoid getting influenza, Kent County area physicians recommend:

- Get your seasonal influenza vaccine
- Wash your hands regularly and thoroughly
- Avoid contact with people who have flu-like symptoms
- Get plenty of rest
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet

Influenza Facts

- Most symptoms can and should be treated at home. Only the most severe illnesses require a visit to an urgent care location or emergency department
- It will take anywhere from five to 10 days for the illness to run its course
- Most people who contract influenza should try to stay home, rest, drink plenty of liquids and take acetaminophen or an anti-inflammatory medicine

#