



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Regional Hospitals Offer Recommendations in Seeking Care for  
Influenza-like Illness**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has officially declared the flu an epidemic. This week, hospitals and physician offices in the region are seeing an unusually high volume of patients due in part to influenza.

While area hospitals remain prepared and capable to treat all patients, in order to prioritize resources for the sickest patients they are recommending the public help by considering the following before going to the hospital:

- According to the CDC, most people with the flu have mild illness and do not need medical care or antiviral drugs. If you get sick with flu symptoms such as fever, chills, headache, vomiting, cough, sore throat, muscle aches or diarrhea, in most cases, it is recommended you stay home and avoid contact with other people.
- If you have the flu, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone (without the use of a fever-reducing medicine) except to get medical care or other necessities. While ill it is recommended you stay home from work, school, travel, shopping, social events and public gatherings.
- If you are in a high-risk group (including young children, people 65 and older, pregnant women and people with certain medical conditions) and develop flu symptoms, it's best for you to contact your doctor. Health care providers will determine whether influenza testing and treatment are needed.
- If you become very sick, the hospitals' emergency departments are ready and able to treat you.
- Due to increased influenza activity in the community, ARHA hospitals are also recommending caution with hospital visitation in order to provide additional protection to patients. Avoid visiting patients if you have flu symptoms. If you have concerns about visitation, contact any hospital directly.

It is not too late to get the flu vaccine, which remains effective against several strains of the virus. According to the CDC, the flu shot also lessens the symptoms and duration of the illness.

Refer to the CDC website for more information at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/takingcare.htm>.

*The Akron Regional Hospital Association (ARHA) was created in 1936 to work on behalf of its members through the coordination of services that assist hospitals in meeting and improving the healthcare needs of the communities they serve.*

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