

April 3, 2020

Pandemic Response Level Elevated - Universal Masking, Increased Visitor Restrictions, Tighter Building Access

Due to the incidence of confirmed community cases of COVID-19, Munson Healthcare Clinical Incident Command has recommended **elevating our pandemic response status level from yellow to orange**. This has been approved by the Munson Healthcare Executive and System Senior Leadership Teams. Orange is one level below the highest pandemic level.

We will be at level orange beginning Saturday, April 4. In addition to the protective measures we have already put into place, we will be implementing three additional measures:

- **Universal masking for clinical facilities**
- **Further limited visitation**
- **Tighter controls to building access so that only critical staff are in the building**

These measures will begin on Saturday for all hospitals, and Monday, April 6 for all ambulatory clinics, community health centers, Home Health, and Hospice House.

Universal Masking Process for Healthcare Team

Masks are a valuable and scarce resource. Please ensure that you have your mask with you as you enter the building for each shift and that you take it home with you at the end of each shift.

- You will receive a mask when entering the screener station for your first shift. After that, you must bring your mask with you and put it on at the screener station.
- At the screener station, sanitize your hands before taking your mask out of the bag and sanitize your hands after you put the mask on your face.
- Wear the mask at all times during the day except when eating or drinking. When taking your mask off to eat or drink and when putting it back on, follow the proper procedure for donning and doffing (click on these links to watch the [donning](#) and [doffing](#) videos).
- Do not wear your mask around your neck or pull it under your chin at any time, including while eating or drinking.
- At the end of your shift, go to the screener station, sanitize your hands, remove the mask, put the mask back in your bag, and sanitize your hands again.
- DO NOT leave your mask in the bag on your unit. Masking begins when you enter the screener station.
- If you need a new mask during your shift, it will be provided on your unit.

MHC is providing clinically approved PPE to you to ensure your safety. For this reason, **homemade masks may not be worn by members of the Healthcare Team**. Patients and visitors may wear their own homemade or purchased masks as long as they are clean and not torn.

Please help us preserve the supply of PPE by reducing the need for replacement masks whenever possible. [Infection Prevention guidelines](#) should be followed on the use and reuse of surgical masks.

Further Limited Visitation - New Visitor Restrictions

Due to the community spread of COVID-19, new guidelines prohibit all visitors, with the following exceptions:

- **Pediatric patients**: One adult primary caregiver (such as a parent, foster parent, or guardian) may accompany a pediatric patient under 18 years of age or a NICU patient. It is strongly preferred that each pediatric patient have one caregiver designated as the sole visitor for the entire hospital stay.
- **Obstetrics patients**: One birthing partner or support person may accompany an obstetrics patient during labor and delivery only.
- **Patients at the end of life***: One visitor is permitted. Extenuating circumstances can be reviewed by the administrator on call, the chief medical officer, or the chief nursing officer.
*Patients with a prognosis of several hours before passing.
- **Surgical patients**: One visitor may accompany the patient. If the surgical patient is admitted to the hospital post-surgery, the visitor must then leave the hospital.
- **Individuals performing official governmental functions**: Personnel from law enforcement, adult protective services, and other such groups are allowed to enter a patient's room, but only one at a time.

Videoconferencing technology is the safest and preferred method of visitation at this time.

Visitors who enter any Munson Healthcare facility will be screened using questions about current health status and contact with people exhibiting signs of COVID-19. Visitors who do not pass the screening questions will not be allowed in the facility, unless they are seeking treatment.

Approved visitors MUST:

- Wash their hands or apply alcohol-based hand sanitizer at point of entry, before and after leaving any rooms, and when exiting the facility.
- Wear a mask provided by or approved by the facility.
- Go directly to and from the patient unit. Visitors are not allowed to use the waiting rooms or café.
- When visiting COVID-19 patients, wear full personal protective equipment (PPE) provided by the facility and consistent with instructions.

The crisis with COVID-19 is changing quickly and we will continue to impose tighter restrictions in the coming days ahead.

Tighter Controls to Building Access

In addition to increasing visitor restrictions, we will also be further restricting access for Healthcare Team members who do not have a critical need to enter our hospitals and clinics. Since every person who enters these clinical care facilities will be masked, we need to conserve this essential PPE for staff with a critical need to be in the building.

Please stop and think before you attempt to enter one of these facilities and ask yourself, "Is it truly essential that I go inside?" Non-essential visits to the hospital include, but are not limited to:

- Coming to the cafeteria to purchase food (because you work in a nearby MHC facility).

- Picking up prescriptions. (Please have your prescriptions transferred to an MHC pharmacy outside your hospital.)
- Visiting the gift shop.
- Attending a meeting. (Meetings should be conducted remotely whenever possible and if an in-person meeting is necessary, please move it to a location outside your hospital.)

Unless you need to perform a critical duty inside the facility, you will no longer be allowed to enter.

