HAMPTON ROADS, Va. (Dec. 17, 2019) — Flu levels in Hampton Roads have reached widespread levels for the second consecutive week, according to CDC reports.

As a result, effective immediately, area hospitals and healthcare systems strongly recommend all patients and visitors, including those seeking outpatient services, wear a mask inside hospitals, medical facilities and physician practices to protect the community from the spread of flu. Masks and hand sanitizer are available at facility entrances for public use.

All patients and visitors, even those who already received a flu shot, are strongly encouraged to wear masks inside healthcare facilities. The flu vaccine is the best prevention available but is not 100 percent effective. Masking provides an added layer of protection from the potentially deadly disease.

As healthcare providers, our collective goal is to protect the community from sickness and disease. Data suggests an infected person can spread the virus 24 hours before showing any signs or symptoms. This community-wide recommendation helps protect our patients, visitors and staff from exposure to flu, even before symptoms are noticeable.

Individuals experiencing flu-like symptoms are asked to stay home and refrain from visiting patients at area hospitals. Symptoms of flu include fever and respiratory illness symptoms such as cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches, chills, and sometimes vomiting and diarrhea.

The recommendation to wear a mask when entering healthcare facilities will remain in effect during the flu season for as long as the disease is at widespread levels.

Additional measures to limit the spread of disease, especially flu, include washing hands frequently, staying home when sick, getting vaccinated and coughing into sleeves or tissues.

Participating medical entities include:
Bon Secours DePaul Medical Center
Bon Secours Mary Immaculate Hospital
Bon Secours Maryview Medical Center
Bon Secours Health Center at Harbour View
Chesapeake Regional Healthcare
Children’s Hospital of The King’s Daughters
Naval Medical Center Portsmouth
Riverside Doctors’ Hospital
Riverside Regional Medical Center
Riverside Shore Memorial Hospital
Riverside Tappahannock Hospital
Riverside Walter Reed Hospital
Sentara Albemarle Medical Center
Sentara CarePlex Hospital and Orthopedic Hospital at Sentara CarePlex
News media are encouraged to contact the following hospital contacts for help identifying interview sources.

**Bon Secours**  
Emma Swann  
804-287-7402

**Chesapeake Regional Healthcare**  
Tricia Hardy  
757-312-6873

**Children’s Hospital of The King’s Daughters**  
Heather Kent  
757-475-8839 (pager)

**Naval Medical Center Portsmouth**  
CDR Shauna O’Sullivan  
757-953-7217

**Riverside Health System**  
Peter Glagola  
757-719-2103

**Sentara Healthcare**  
Sentara Media Pager  
757-671-4971