

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Northern Illinois Rockford Region Public Information Officers
Media Contact: Katherine O'Toole, Media Liaison, 815-720-4213
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This is a joint news release issued by the Northern Illinois Rockford Region (Region 1) Public Information Officers. Region 1 serves Boone, Carroll, DeKalb, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside, and Winnebago Counties.

REGION 1 LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS AND HOSPITALS URGE PUBLIC TO TAKE STEPS TO ADDRESS THE HIGH HOSPITAL PATIENT VOLUMES

Northern Illinois Rockford Region – Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases are rising at an alarming rate in the Northern Illinois Rockford Region, Region 1, and an increasing number of patients with COVID-19 are being admitted to local hospitals. Hospital bed availability has reached a critically low level, demand on hospital resources is high, and most of the local hospitals have experienced long wait times in their Emergency Departments.

With the identification of COVID-19 variants (Delta and Omicron) that spread more easily and the increasing COVID-19 cases in our region, the nine county local health departments and the eleven hospitals in Region 1 jointly seek the support and action of the community to address the high patient volumes.

The Public Is Urged To:

- Use the emergency department for emergencies only.
 - Contact your primary care provider or go to a walk-in clinic for non-emergency needs. For more information on when to use the emergency department, see the attached guide from Northwestern Medicine.
- Show compassion towards staff who are working hard amid this crisis.
- Get vaccinated for COVID-19 and flu. If eligible, get your COVID-19 booster shot.
 - COVID-19 vaccine is available for everyone 5 and older.
 - Flu vaccine is available for everyone 6 months and older.
 - Flu and COVID-19 vaccine can be given at the same time.
 - To find a vaccine provider, go to vaccines.gov, call 1-800-232-0233 or text your ZIP code to 738829
- Prevent the spread of COVID-19 with layered measures. In addition to vaccination:
 - MASK-UP: Wear a face covering when with individuals outside your household.
 - BACK-UP: Keep at least 6 feet apart from others.
 - WASH-UP: Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- If you test positive for COVID-19, ask about monoclonal antibodies which can reduce the severity of the disease.

For more information:

Go to IDPH and State of Illinois websites on COVID-19 here:

- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19>
- <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/>

For general questions about COVID-19, call the IDPH hotline at 1-800-889-3931



EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT VS. IMMEDIATE CARE CENTER

Where to seek care for injuries and illnesses



CALL 9-1-1 IF YOU'RE EXPERIENCING A MEDICAL EMERGENCY, SUCH AS:

- + Severe bleeding
- + Severe chest pain or shortness of breath
- + Severe injury
- + Heart attack symptoms: severe chest pain with nausea, shortness of breath, dizziness, fatigue or cold sweat
- + Symptoms of stroke: Facial drooping, arm weakness or speech difficulties
- + Suicidal behavior that causes an immediate threat to safety
- + Impaired vision



YOU SHOULD BE TREATED IN THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT FOR:

- Asthma – moderate to severe
- Head injuries with loss of consciousness or seizures
- Abdominal pain that doesn't go away after a few hours
- Seizure
- Amputations, deep wounds or severe burns
- Poisoning or overdose
- Severe allergic reaction
- Persistent head pain
- Altered mental state
- Vaginal bleeding with pregnancy
- Fever with a rash
- Multiple injuries
- Physical or sexual assault
- Severe depression



YOU SHOULD BE TREATED IN THE IMMEDIATE CARE CENTER FOR:

- Cold and flu symptoms
- Broken bones and dislocated joints
- Minor cuts, sprains and burns
- Pink eye
- Persistent diarrhea or profuse vomiting
- Animal bites or insect stings
- Urinary tract infections
- Skin problems
- Foreign objects in the eyes, nose or ears
- Earache
- Fever without a rash
- Tetanus shots
- Back or joint pain

