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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hospitals in Hudson Valley Region Intensify Flu Prevention Efforts

Flu Shots and Surgical Facemasks Part of Effort to Stem Flu

(Newburgh, NY...November 27, 2013) Flu season is here and this year hospitals in the Hudson Valley region are taking additional steps to prevent the spread of flu, including enhanced efforts to vaccinate all employees and distribution of surgical facemasks. Worn by employees, these offer a physical barrier to flu transmission. This is a comprehensive endeavor to protect patients, visitors, and employees from exposure to the flu virus.

While an annual flu vaccine remains the single best method for preventing the flu, a surgical facemask, worn by employees, provides added protection to patients, employees, and visitors. All hospitals in the Hudson Valley region offer the flu vaccine to all employees and, beginning this year, also provide employees with surgical facemasks, as required by recent guidance from the New York State Department of Health.

As a matter of standard practice, all hospitals in the Hudson Valley region enforce universally-recognized precautions to prevent the flu. These include hand washing, the use of hand sanitizers, placed conveniently throughout the hospital, as well as goggles, and gowns. In addition, all hospitals adhere to rigorous infection control guidelines and policies every day to ensure a clean environment for patients, staff, and visitors. These practices are especially important during flu season. Antiseptic wipes are located in patient rooms, work stations, hallways, and other treatment areas and are easily accessible to hospital employees responsible for sanitizing medical equipment and surface areas.

During last year's flu season, the New York State Department of Health recorded 45,352 confirmed flu cases, 9,537 patients hospitalized and 14 pediatric deaths from influenza.

"Flu prevention is a priority at all hospitals in the Hudson Valley region and hospital employees work every day to lessen the spread of flu virus by adhering to strict infection control practices and prevention guidelines," said Kevin Dahill, president/CEO of the Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association, the organization that represents hospitals in the Hudson Valley region. "Starting this year, hospitals, nursing homes, and other facilities must document the number and percentage of personnel vaccinated against the flu to state and federal authorities."

Most hospitals in the Hudson Valley region offer flu shot clinics. For more information about these services, please call the local hospital.



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