

News Release

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Unified Health Command Requests Healthcare Facilities to Restrict Visitors

Butte, MT – The Unified Health Command (UHC), comprised of the City and County of Butte-Silver Bow, the Butte-Silver Bow Healthcare Coalition partners, and St. James Healthcare, has recommended that visitors to area healthcare facilities, including hospitals, clinics, long-term care and assisted living facilities, be temporarily restricted.

Voluntary visitor restrictions apply to:

- People with respiratory symptoms, such as coughs, colds, flu, sore throats, aches, and fever
- All children and young adults under the age of 18 (hospital restrictions may vary)
- People who have recently come into close contact with anyone who was ill with colds, flu or other respiratory symptoms.

“The restrictions are part of an effort to prevent and control the spread of respiratory diseases in our community,” said Karen Sullivan, Butte-Silver Bow health officer. To date, there are **NO CASES** of the novel Coronavirus, or COVID-19, in Montana, but the flu season continues and the community can take steps to prevent the spread of all respiratory diseases.

Voluntary visiting restrictions to healthcare facilities will continue until there is a decline in overall cases of flu and other respiratory diseases in Montana. In addition, healthcare facilities may limit the number of visitors and the length of visits to patients and residents in those facilities. These measures will help protect the health and safety of patients, visitors and staff.

Healthy visitors to healthcare facilities should follow these guidelines:

- Clean your hands before and after visiting a patient
- Always cover your cough and use a tissue or your sleeve when you cough or sneeze
- Clean your hands after coughing or sneezing

In addition to visitor restrictions to area healthcare facilities, the UHC reminds everyone to keep in mind everyday preventive actions:

- Washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue or coughing into your elbow
- Avoiding touching your face, eyes, nose and mouth
- Staying at home if you're sick
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick
- Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces regularly, including countertops and sinks
- People age 60-plus, or with serious chronic medical conditions, should restrict attending large gatherings

As this situation evolves, the public can find accurate and timely information on COVID-19 through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website, www.cdc.gov/COVID19, as well as through the Butte-Silver Bow Health Department at 406.497.5008.

The CDC offers specific guidance for long-term care facilities, schools, faith-based organizations and others about preparing for disease outbreak.

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