



March 17, 2020

Dear Community Clergy partners,

Like you, here at Essentia Health, we're concerned about COVID-19 and the health risks it poses to those who become infected. Maintaining the health, wellness and safety of our patients and staff are our top priority. We have plans in place and can respond quickly and efficiently – should the virus affect patients, families and staff.

Our goal is to maintain a safe and healthy environment, and our staff are trained in infection control practices. We're also closely monitoring and responding to the latest information from the Minnesota Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and working with our infection prevention and emergency preparedness experts. In addition, we are partnering with state and local public health agencies to ensure we're prepared for any potential threat.

In addition to restricting visitors at our senior community facilities, Essentia Health has made the difficult decision to begin restricting visitors to our hospitals on March 16th at noon. We know these restrictions may be difficult for patients and their loved ones. However, we believe this step is necessary to protect our patients, employees and communities from this illness during this time.

We have made provisions for visitors in special situations. **Our community clergy partners may visit patients at end of life. However, screening will still take place prior to visitation.** The screening includes answering a series of questions and taking your temperature. You will not be admitted if you:

- Have signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as a fever, cough or shortness of breath or sore throat
- Have, in the last 14 days, had contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19; are under investigation for COVID-19; or are ill with a respiratory illness
- Live in a community or a neighboring area where the spread of COVID-19 is occurring

We're committed to safeguarding the health and wellness of our patients and preventing the spread of illness. Communication is crucial in situations such as these, and we'll keep you updated as the situation evolves. We will post the latest available information on the Essentia Health website at www.EssentiaHealth.org.

Thank you so much for all you're doing to meet the needs of our communities during these uncertain times.

We're here to answer your questions and concerns. Please reach Chaplain Chelle at (701) 364-8444.