

## COVID Statement

October 5, 2020

Olean, NY – Upper Allegheny Health System (UAHS) officials are concerned about Covid-19 positive results in the community. As medical experts predicted, with the arrival of fall, schools opening and attempts to normalize social behavior, there has been a rise in community spread across the globe and here at home.

“Everyone needs to remain vigilant by taking the necessary precautions. At OGH our staff and our physicians take this very seriously and make every effort to keep our patients and themselves safe,” said William Mills, MD, UAHS chief medical officer. “Locally we have noted that especially younger people have ignored safety measures.”

“We are taking no chances. Out of an abundance of caution we are suspending patient visitation at OGH for 30 days with the exception of end of life situations and obstetrics visitation,” he said. “We have new capabilities to arrange for virtual visits via Ipad. We are also suspending student rotations in the hospital until November 1.”

“As a community we all need to do everything within our power to halt the spread of this virus. We must remain focused as the likelihood of continued community spread increases as colleges and high schools are now in session and flu season is upon us, Dr. Mills said. “We can’t stop COVID, but we can significantly decrease the risks to our employees, family and community becoming infected if we all do our part – not just in the hospital, but in the community. Remember – wash your hands, wear your mask and maintain your distance.”

“We have seen patient and employee positive cases at OGH before during this entire pandemic as have most hospitals,” said Dr. Mills. “Today is no different. The fact is that COVID is present at most hospitals. It is part of what hospitals everywhere now deal with.”

Working closely with the Cattaraugus County Department of Health, Olean General Hospital is taking the following steps to mitigate the presence of COVID-19:

- Screening everyone upon entering the hospital.
- Visitors are asked screening questions and temperature checked before entering.
- Employees are expected to report if they have symptoms or exposure to COVID-19 or if they have traveled to areas where COVID-19 is prevalent.
- Enforcing masking policy, meaning everyone must wear a mask at all times.
- Vigorously enforce hand washing for everyone in the building.
- Continually updating staff with the facts.
- Posting appropriate signage in all areas.
- Creating space for social distancing.

“Patient safety is our number one priority. We have every confidence that patients who seek care at OGH continue to be safe,” Dr. Mills said.