

The University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC) has begun to see patients with novel H1N1 influenza infection. One of the major issues facing many hospitals and other medical facilities across the country is the overuse of emergency services by patients who can be safely treated in other settings including their primary physician's office.

As such, The University of Maryland Medical Center Adult Emergency Department (AED) has initiated plans to manage the expected surge in patients with influenza and influenza like-illness (ILI). Despite careful planning, the possibility still exists that our adult emergency department will be overwhelmed with patient volume. Accordingly, wait times in the Emergency Department could be long despite all best efforts. We are therefore requesting the help of all UMMC staff as well as UMB students, staff and faculty.

Please consider these important guidelines:

- If you have mild flu-like symptoms including fever, cough or sore throat you do not need to seek care in the Emergency Department. Care can be sought with your primary care physician.
- **If you have difficulty breathing or become short of breath, become dehydrated or cannot keep down liquids, or develop other severe symptoms, you should seek immediate medical attention which includes calling your physician and/or going to the nearest urgent care or emergency department.**
- **People with high-risk conditions, listed below, should contact a healthcare provider immediately as they may need further evaluation including diagnostic testing and/or therapy with antivirals or antibiotics. These visits do not need to occur in the Emergency Department unless they have severe symptoms such as those described above.**

High-risk groups who should promptly communicate with your healthcare provider if they develop influenza like symptoms include:

- Children less than 5 years old;
- Persons aged 65 years or older;
- Children and adolescents (less than 18 years) who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy and who might be at risk for experiencing Reye syndrome after influenza virus infection;
- Pregnant women;
- Adults and children who have chronic pulmonary, cardiovascular, hepatic, hematological, neurologic, neuromuscular, or metabolic disorders;
- Adults and children who have immunosuppression (including immunosuppression caused by medications or by HIV);

Thank you in advance for your cooperation. Please be assured that if your condition requires a visit to our Emergency Department at UMMC, we will do our best to respond to your need. UMMC's Emergency Department has also developed a plan to work in partnership with the emergency department teams at nearby Maryland General Hospital so that we can collectively manage any potential surge in patient volumes within our immediate region.