



News Release

For Immediate Release
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Trinitas Prepares for Potential Coronavirus *Proximity to Newark Liberty Airport Prompts Additional Precautions*

Elizabeth, NJ --- As a community hospital in close proximity to major transportation hubs like Newark Liberty Airport, Trinitas Regional Medical Center physicians and staff must remain in a state of continual readiness for any public health emergency including the potential of a patient with the novel Coronavirus, COVID-19.

Beginning in mid-January when the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) published information on the early identification of a novel Coronavirus, Trinitas Infection Prevention and Control staff, along with a physician epidemiologist, began to share information and recommended screening guidelines with Emergency Department physicians and staff.

“Trinitas takes the threats posed by this new virus very seriously and we are fully prepared to meet the challenges they present,” says Gary S. Horan, FACHE, Trinitas President and Chief Executive Officer. “As our main hospital facility is just three miles from one of the busiest airports in the United States, we are right at the gateway to hundreds of thousands of international travelers who are passing through or looking to enter our region.”

“Using the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as our content expert, our approach has included education of frontline staff to recognize the risk factors for COVID-19; screening at our patient entrance points for out-of-country travel, especially to those countries identified as high risk; appropriate isolation of patients with flu-like symptoms; ongoing actions necessary to reduce the risk of the spread of infection to other patients, our staff and our community; and continual monitoring of the situation,” explains William Farrer, MD, Epidemiologist and Chair of the Infections Prevention and Control Committee at Trinitas.

Under the guidance of Infection Prevention and Emergency Management leaders, staff members continually train and participate in exercises designed to assure safe responses to emerging illnesses and infections as well as to manage an influx of patients and individuals who are concerned they may have been exposed. This approach includes aligning with City of Elizabeth and Union County health

agencies, meetings with community members and maintaining close contact with local emergency response personnel, particularly those at the airport.

“Trinitas stands ready to care for our community with well-trained doctors and staff, and have taken precautions, such as restricting visitors who exhibit symptoms or have traveled to areas of high risk,” says Mary McTigue, RN, Vice President/Patient Care Services & Chief Nursing Officer at Trinitas. These precautions have been in place since the start of the regular flu season, but have now expanded to include requiring employees who have traveled to high risk areas to self-quarantine at home for 14 days.

“The most important message is for the general public to take simple precautions. Hand-washing is still the single most important action to prevent the spread of any infection. Use good cough etiquette – cough into a tissue or your elbow, and then wash your hands for 20 seconds,” McTigue says. If you know someone who has traveled to a high risk country, encourage them to speak with their health provider and to self-monitor for fever and flu-like symptoms. Finally, get information from experts about COVID-19 that can be found through the CDC COVID-19 website at <https://www.cdc.gov> and the New Jersey Department of Health’s 24 hour Public Hotline at 1-800-222-1222.

About Trinitas Regional Medical Center

Trinitas Regional Medical Center (TRMC), a major center for comprehensive health services for those who live and work in Central New Jersey, is a Catholic teaching medical center sponsored by the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth in partnership with Elizabethtown Healthcare Foundation. With 12 Centers of Excellence across the continuum of care, Trinitas has distinguished itself in cardiology, cancer care, behavioral health, renal care, nursing education, diabetes management, wound healing and sleep medicine. For more information on Trinitas Regional Medical Center, visit: www.TrinitasRMC.org or call (908) 994-5138.