

Dane County health systems: Continue COVID-19 policies for hospitals and clinics

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MADISON, Wis. – The spread of COVID-19 has gone up and down throughout the past year, but Dane County health systems want patients to know that safety protocols for healthcare facilities remain in effect.

In a joint message, Access Community Health Centers, Group Health Cooperative of South Central Wisconsin, Stoughton Health, SSM Health, UnityPoint Health – Meriter, UW Health and the William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital remind patients and visitors of the following:

- Masks are still required at all times within healthcare facilities.
- There are still limitations on visitors for most appointments and locations.
- Patients and visitors will continue to be subject to COVID-19 screenings.

These policies benefit patients, visitors and staff, as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention “community level” of COVID-19 for Dane County continues to hover between “medium” and “high,” and hospitalization rates remain elevated.

A high-quality mask – a medical-grade surgical mask or an N95 – is required to be worn by patients and visitors over the nose and mouth, including while patients are waiting in clinic rooms for a nurse or clinician.

Visitor restrictions remain in effect to limit the opportunity for spread of the virus in healthcare facilities. Because policies can vary based on the location and type of appointment, patients should always confirm the visitor policies with their provider or clinic prior to the appointment.

Patients who have COVID-19 are not permitted visitors unless under rare circumstances such as end-of-life care. Visitors should refrain from accompanying or visiting patients if they recently tested positive for COVID-19 or are currently experiencing a COVID-19 symptom.

Finally, all patients are subject to COVID-19 screening and should answer screening questions honestly. This allows care teams to provide the best care and take the proper precautions, such as donning additional personal protective equipment, using virtual appointments or sometimes rescheduling appointments.

As cooler weather approaches and school begins in the coming weeks, every health system is closely monitoring the state of COVID-19 in the community and working to ensure facilities remain a safe place for all to receive the care they need.