

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Milwaukee Area Doctors Remind Patients Not to Delay Routine and Acute Care

Emergency and preventive care is safe and available at local health care providers

MILWAUKEE - Doctors at Milwaukee-area hospitals and community health centers are concerned that people are avoiding local emergency rooms and clinics because of the COVID-19 crisis and may be delaying important treatment and preventive care.

Advocate Aurora, Ascension Wisconsin, Children's Wisconsin, Froedtert & Medical College of Wisconsin, ProHealth Care and Milwaukee's Community Health Centers (also known as federally qualified health centers) have all seen a significant decrease in the number of people coming to their emergency rooms, urgent care clinics and outpatient centers for critical and routine care. They want the public to know that their facilities and providers can safely treat patients for non-COVID illnesses.

"A major concern is patients who are delaying evaluation for acute conditions," said Dr. Marc de Moya, chief of trauma and acute care surgery at Froedtert & Medical College of Wisconsin. "If patients wait too long, they may need a longer hospitalization, have complications that could have been avoided – or worse. Individuals with symptoms of acute conditions such as heart attack, stroke or appendicitis need to seek care now."

Dr. Mike Gutzeit, chief medical officer at Children's Wisconsin, said: "We have seen families wait for days to have an injured arm or leg evaluated. And we are also seeing some families delay vaccinations. If anything, this pandemic has shown the risk communicable diseases pose and the importance of vaccines."

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“Chronic disease management is so important, especially among African American and Hispanic populations that experience significant health disparities,” said Jenni Sevenich, chief executive officer of Progressive Community Health Centers. “Community health centers help individuals manage chronic conditions like diabetes, hypertension and asthma. It’s essential for our patients to maintain their regular care and medications. Whether their visits are through video, over the phone, or in person, we are prepared to meet their needs.”

Local health care providers have modified processes and procedures to ensure the safety of patients and staff, including screening patients and visitors, universal masking policies, visitor restrictions, increased telehealth services and separate areas for COVID-19 patients.

Milwaukee area hospitals are each working toward their own expansion of non-emergent care, prioritizing surgical procedures that were postponed, and scheduling additional services based on the availability and sustainability of testing, the ability to conduct contact tracing and available supplies of personal protective equipment.

Anyone who has a medical condition that needs to be managed, and anyone who is experiencing a medical emergency, should not delay seeking care from a medical professional. Individuals experiencing life-threatening symptoms should call 911. People who do not have a regular doctor, including those without health insurance can call 211 to get connected to a health care provider in their community.

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