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Updated Resources for U.S. Hospitals and Health Systems on Preparing for COVID-19 and Stewardship of Personal Protective Equipment

Register for AHA member webinar Feb. 21 with Providence St. Joseph Health, which treated the first patient in the U.S. with COVID-19

At Issue:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is closely monitoring and collaborating with the World Health Organization (WHO) on an outbreak caused by a novel coronavirus first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. The new coronavirus (COVID-19), to date, has resulted in over 70,000 confirmed cases and nearly 2,000 deaths in China and has spread to a growing number of countries. The first case in the U.S. was announced on Jan. 21, and more cases have been confirmed and likely will continue to be identified in the U.S. in coming weeks.

All U.S. hospitals and health care systems should be prepared for the possible arrival of patients with COVID-19. We strongly encourage hospitals to continue to check the [CDC's COVID-19 webpage](#) for [guidance](#) for health care personnel and hospitals. The agency continues to update its guidance and resources as more is learned about the virus, how the infection spreads and its prevalence in the U.S.

In particular, we wish to bring two important recently released CDC resources to your attention.

1. [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Hospital Preparedness Assessment Tool](#). This tool highlights important areas for hospitals to review in preparation for potential arrivals of COVID-19 patients, including infection prevention and control policies and training for health care personnel; the process for rapidly identifying and isolating patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19; patient placement; transmission-based precautions; movement of patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 within the facility; hand hygiene; environmental cleaning and monitoring; managing health care personnel; and visitor access and movement within the facility.
2. [Healthcare Supply of Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#). This includes the CDC's current recommendations on who does and does not need PPE; the challenges facing the global supply of PPE; strategies for optimizing the supply of N95 respirators in health care settings in the face of decreasing supply,

including using an occupational health and safety “hierarchy of controls approach”; and answers to questions about respirators and their use.

AHA Efforts:

The AHA continues to closely track the progress of this outbreak, its impact on hospitals and health systems, and the status of the supply chain for PPE and other critical medical supplies and products. We have been working with the CDC, the Health and Human Services’ Assistant Secretary of Preparedness and Response, and the Food and Drug Administration to ensure that hospitals and health systems stay informed and prepared to respond. All AHA communications and outside resources are available on our [COVID-19 webpage](#). We have hosted and will continue to host regular calls, webinars and podcasts with CDC experts and others.

What You Can Do:

- ✓ Share this advisory with your chief medical officer, chief nursing officer, chief quality officer, hospital epidemiologist, infection control leadership, emergency department director, emergency preparedness staff, employee health and heads of services (e.g., environmental services, resources and materials managers, hospital engineers, pediatrics and critical care).
- ✓ If you have not already done so, add an alert to your patient intake or triage protocol that prompts staff to inquire about travel history or potential exposure to someone with confirmed COVID-19 for any individual with fever and/or symptoms of lower respiratory illness consistent with [CDC’s clinical criteria](#) for evaluation for COVID-19 infection.
- ✓ Ensure that you designate appropriate staff to regularly check for important updates in guidance on the [CDC COVID-19 website](#), [AHA webpage](#) or other reliable sites for updated information that should be shared with your staff.

Next Steps

The AHA is arranging member webinars and calls so that hospitals and health systems have an opportunity to hear from experts and ask questions. The next webinar will feature Rebecca Bartles, executive director of system infection prevention at Providence St. Joseph Health in Washington state, which was the first health care organization to treat a patient in the U.S. with COVID-19. **To register for this members-only Feb. 21 webinar from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. ET, [click here](#).** More information on future calls will be shared through our member communications and AHA Today.

Further Questions

If you have questions, please contact Roslyne Schulman at rschulman@aha.org or Nancy Foster at nfoster@aha.org.