



For Immediate Release

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ARNOT HEALTH TO REQUIRE MASKING IN CERTAIN CLINICAL AREAS

ELMIRA, NY (January 3, 2024) – Due to an increase in the prevalence of respiratory illnesses, including Influenza, RSV and COVID-19, Arnot Health is mandating the wearing of masks in certain patient care areas of our hospital campuses.

For two weeks beginning Thursday, January 4 until Thursday, January 18, employees, visitors, and volunteers in the following areas will be required to wear a mask to help protect our patients and each other from infection.

- Inpatient Hospital Units
- Emergency Departments
- Skilled Nursing Units at St. Joseph's and Ira Davenport Hospitals
- Falck Cancer Center
- Infusion Center at Arnot Ogden Medical Center

Since the end of November 2023, the number of RSV patients has been increasing in both children and adults, doubling in December. Since the first influenza-related admission on December 1, 2023, we have seen nearly 150 outpatients test positive for the flu, and 14 patients admitted to our hospitals. Finally, since October 2023, we have seen our number of inpatients with COVID-19 triple.

These trends and the prevalence of other respiratory illnesses led to the institution of the two-week mask requirement in patient care areas, and in all other areas on our campuses, we are making a strong recommendation that masks be worn. Patients who are medically able to wear a mask will also be expected to do so, and masks will be available in all areas.

This action is being taken to safeguard the health of our patients, visitors, and staff, and will be re-evaluated in 14 days.

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