



April 22, 2020

To Our Patients and Families,

**How are new admissions being screened?**

All prospective admissions are being asked about travel to a country for which the CDC has issued a Level 2 or 3 travel designation within the last 14 days, contact with any person under investigation for COVID-19, or current symptoms of a respiratory infection (e.g. sore throat, cough, fever, or shortness of breath). Patients with any of these are referred for medical clearance prior to admission. Patients being referred to Four Winds by emergency rooms are being screened for illness prior to transfer as well as upon arrival at Four Winds.

Upon arrival at admissions all patients and those accompanying a patient are assessed for elevated temperature and asked to wear a mask. If an individual accompanying a patient has an elevated temperature they are immediately asked to return to their vehicle. Any patients with an elevated temperature are referred for appropriate medical care and not admitted until medically cleared. As an added precaution families will no longer follow patients to the unit at admission. A Mental Health Worker will escort you/your child to the unit after you have had a chance to say good-bye.

**How are current patients being monitored for illness?**

All patients will be given masks and educated about proper mask use. Wearing of masks by patients will be strongly encouraged. Current patients are assessed daily for signs of respiratory infection. Any patients experiencing symptoms of a respiratory infection will be separated from the community and referred for appropriate medical care. For mild cases the CDC recommends treatment at home under the medical supervision of a primary care doctor. For severe cases (e.g. respiratory distress) patients will be referred to an emergency room.

**What can I expect while I am/my child is hospitalized?**

Therapists will be making an effort to conduct family sessions over the telephone to reduce the number of people entering patient units daily. On the day of discharge you/your child's therapist

will set an appointment for discharge. Please arrive promptly at the assigned time. At discharge we ask that each patient is picked up by only one person (parent, guardian, or partner). When this individual arrives at the unit they will be screened for fever and symptoms of illness and asked to wear a mask. Any individuals with a fever or symptoms of illness will be asked to wait in their vehicle. A nurse will discharge the patient and escort them to the vehicle.

### **How are visitors being screened?**

In order to limit the exposure for patients and staff, visitation is currently suspended. This policy will be strictly enforced with no exceptions for individual circumstances. Additionally, the bus service usually available for families has been suspended until further notice.

We understand how important it is for our patients to feel the support of loved ones; you will be given telephone numbers to call your loved one on the unit. We are also in the process of facilitating video calls by appointment using Zoom, a free app available for download.

### **How are staff members being screened?**

All staff members will be masked. The current guidance is that staff members are screened using the same guidelines as visitors. All staff members are screened for signs and symptoms of illness including fever at the start of each shift. Staff members who are experiencing symptoms of respiratory illness or fever are sent home and do not return to work before obtaining medical clearance. Staff members who are ill with respiratory illnesses are in close communication with the Hospital's Infection Control Nurse prior to resuming their regular duties.

### **Will I be notified if I/my child have been exposed to COVID-19?**

This is a constantly evolving situation. We will continue to revise our policies and procedures as the CDC and NYS Department of Health revise their recommendations. Our priority is maintaining a safe environment for our patients and staff. If you have any additional questions please reach out to your/your child's treatment team.

### **What can I do to protect myself?**

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID 19 infection. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

This is a constantly evolving situation. We will continue to revise our policies, procedures, and programming as the CDC and NYS Department of Health revise their recommendations. We will notify you as things change, but appreciate your understanding that, given the rapidly evolving nature of COVID-19, there may be times when changes occur with little notice. While we are attempting to keep families abreast of any changes, these are also posted on [fourwindshospital.com](http://fourwindshospital.com) under the “Patient & Family Information” tab. Our priority is maintaining a safe environment for our patients and staff. If you have any additional questions please reach out to your/your child’s treatment team.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Moira Morrissey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Moira Morrissey, Esq.  
Chief Executive Officer