

March 18, 2020—FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WMC announces, effective tomorrow, March 19, 2020 only visitors of hospice, critically ill and obstetrics and pediatrics patients will be permitted inside Weirton Medical Center. We are exercising the utmost caution when it comes to the safety of our patients and staff. Given the seriousness of COVID-19 and governmental mandates on social distancing, the fewer people coming through the doors, the safer our patients and the community will be. Fortunately, most patients come into the hospital with a cell phone which enables them constant communication with loved ones. The number of visitors of hospice patients or critically ill patients will be determined on a case-by-case basis. One visitor (the same one throughout the duration of the patient's stay) will be permitted for patients in the Obstetrics/Pediatrics department. Again, all of this is for the protection of those inside the hospital and, ultimately, the entire community.

Meantime, WMC continues to provide patients with access to COVID-19 testing at an off-site location. The testing clinic is for patients who have called their WMC primary care physician with their symptoms. If the physician who is a member of the WMC Medical Staff determines a COVID-19 test is necessary, he or she then writes a prescription for the test at the off-site facility. Patients with COVID-19 symptoms are asked not to go directly to their WMC physician or the emergency room. Patients are urged to call their primary care physician if they meet the criteria. We urge anyone with concerns to contact their WMC Primary care physician as only they can refer patients to the off-site testing facility. Again, this process is in place to keep the community as safe as possible.