

WITH THE HOLIDAY SEASON UPON US, THE HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION OF RHODE ISLAND SHARES AN IMPORTANT PUBLIC MESSAGE

(Providence, RI) November 17, 2022 – As the public begins to consider indoor holiday gatherings, it's important to have preventative health measures in mind. A surge in respiratory infections in children has hospitals locally and nationally at, or near, capacity. **RSV**, respiratory syncytial virus, is quite common, but it can be especially dangerous for infants and children.

Nationally, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services data shows that 76% of pediatric beds across the country are full. Here in Rhode Island, Hasbro Children's Hospital reports they are operating at 100% capacity.

"RSV is here and peak flu season is right around the corner. Hospitals and other healthcare facilities are working hard to treat everyone in a timely manner but must triage those patients most sick. There are things the public can do to help ensure they, and their loved ones, get the best care possible," says Teresa Paiva Weed, President of the Hospital Association of Rhode Island.

"Recognizing when to stay home, when to visit the doctor, and when to seek emergency care is crucially important," says Paiva Weed. Working closely with the RI Department of Health to inform the public about going to the right place for the right care, the Hospital Association of RI offers these tips:

- **DO:** Contact your primary care physician or pediatrician for non-emergency medical conditions, such as mild symptoms and routine testing.
- **DO:** Seek hospital emergency care if symptoms are worrisome and emergency care is needed. Emergency medical conditions can include difficulty breathing, dehydration and worsening symptoms.
- **DO:** Protect yourself by getting your **FLU SHOT**. Stay up to date on your COVID shots as well, visit www.vaccines.gov to search for vaccine availability or call your provider or the local health department.
- **DO:** Be patient if seeking care through a hospital emergency department. Consider that wait times may be elevated as respiratory illnesses reach seasonal peak levels.
- **DO:** Consider having your children **wear a mask in public places** including school when you know local case rates of respiratory illnesses are high.

- **DO:** Practice frequent and proper hand washing and **stay home** if you're not feeling well.
- **DO:** Be kind to the hospital staff if you do end up in the emergency room.

CDC'S LATEST GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES FOR PROTECTING AGAINST RSV:

[RSV \(Respiratory Syncytial Virus\) | CDC](#)