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### Area Hospitals Advance Local Preparations for COVID-19 Response

In an effort to alleviate growing pressures on our Emergency Departments, Walk-In Care Centers, Urgent Cares and primary care offices, Lima Memorial and St. Rita's, in partnership with Allen County Public Health, are advancing our local preparations for COVID-19. Effective Tuesday, March 17 at 8 a.m., a Community Call Center and Designated Community Evaluation Centers will begin operations.

- A Community Call Center has been established for area residents. The phone number is 419-226-9000.
  - If residents believe they have COVID-19 symptoms, we are encouraging them to call this number before visiting a healthcare provider, Emergency Department, Urgent Care or Walk-In Care Center.
  - They will be asked a series of questions, and next step recommendations will be made based on their responses.
  - If an in-person follow-up is recommended, they will be directed where to go for further evaluation.
  - Two Designated Community Evaluation Centers have been established by Lima Memorial and St. Rita's. The centers will test for flu, strep and other viral ailments to help rule out COVID-19. If it is determined that patients need further care, they will be directed appropriately. Patients must call 419-226-9000 before being seen at one of these centers.
  - Please note: Due to current limited availability, COVID-19 testing is limited to hospitalized patients meeting testing criteria. Allen County Public Health does not conduct COVID-19 testing.
- Lima Memorial, Mercy Health and Allen County Public Health are in constant communication about this situation as it evolves and will continue to work together in the best interest of our patients, our associates and our community.
- Mercy Health and Lima Memorial continue to remain aligned with CDC guidelines. Both medical centers have updated visitor restrictions on their websites that are aligned with these recommendations.