



**Wednesday, March 25, 2020 - 3:00 P.M.**

**COVID-19 Update  
Ascension Wisconsin**

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

**Kathleen Crean, Public Relations Specialist**

[kathleen.crean@ascension.org](mailto:kathleen.crean@ascension.org)

**815-236-6190 (Mobile)**

The COVID-19 situation continues to rapidly evolve. This document is intended to provide information for Ascension Wisconsin facilities in northeast Wisconsin. Additional notices will be sent as conditions warrant. Thank you for your patience and understanding during this unprecedented time.

**For additional information on COVID19 and Ascension resources, please visit:**

<https://healthcare.ascension.org/Specialty-Care/Coronavirus> or call our dedicated COVID-19 informational hotline at **1-833-981-0711**.

**NEW IN THIS UPDATE:**

1. Information Requests for Patients Under Investigation/Positive Cases
2. Financial Hardship Policy

**REMINDERS:**

1. Virtual Visitation
2. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Donations

**RESOURCES:**

1. [American Hospital Association, American Medical Association and American Nursing Association Letter to the Public - #StayHome](#)
2. [FEMA Coronavirus Rumor Control](#)
3. [WI Health Care Leaders Urge the Public to Abide by "Safer at Home" Order for COVID-19](#)
4. [Non-Medical Services - United Way 2-1-1](#)

**Information Requests for Patients Under Investigation/Positive Cases**

The health and safety of our patients, associates and visitors is always a top priority. Ascension Wisconsin has been working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services to monitor and ensure the best possible care for patients with potential or confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Out of respect for patient privacy, we will not be releasing data on the number of patients who are being



tested or treated for COVID-19 at our facilities. Requests for specific details, as they relate to any COVID-19-related patient condition updates, should be directed to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

### **Financial Hardship Policy**

Our Mission calls us to care for people who are most vulnerable. Ascension Wisconsin will support the health and financial well-being of our patients during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ascension Wisconsin has taken the following steps to ensure the care patients receive does not add an undue financial burden during the COVID pandemic:

- Patients who are uninsured will not be billed for COVID-19 related testing or treatment
- Patients who are insured will not be billed for out-of-pocket expenses (ex: copays) related to COVID-19 testing or treatment
- Financial assistance applications will be valid for one year to reduce the burden of re-application
- Our payment grace period has been extended to four months (120 days). Patients who are unable to make their monthly payments, should call the number listed on their billing statement to have a hold placed on their account.

As the economic impact of COVID-19 continues to evolve, Ascension Wisconsin is diligently monitoring the situation to ensure we are protecting our patients, associates and the communities we are privileged to serve.

For additional information on financial assistance in Ascension Wisconsin please visit:

<https://healthcare.ascension.org/Financial-Assistance/Wisconsin>.

## **REMINDERS**

### **Ascension Wisconsin Virtual Visitation**

To help minimize the impact of COVID-19, we're limiting visitors in our hospitals. Effective March 21, 2020, in-person visitation has been temporarily stopped. We encourage family members and friends of patients in our care to stay connected with their loved ones by virtual visitation. Our goal is to protect our associates and those we are privileged to serve by limiting possible exposure to COVID-19 and directing people to the right level of care.

There will be some exceptions on a case-by-case basis, including labor and delivery, pediatrics, neonatal intensive care (NICU) and end-of-life care.

We understand that during this time it is important to stay connected to your loved ones and remain aware of their status while hospitalized. We encourage any potential visitors to use alternate methods of communication to stay in contact with loved ones, such as calling, video chatting, or texting.

The following apps can be used to help people connect virtually with their loved ones: Facebook Messenger, Facetime, Google hangouts, Google Duo, WhatsApp, Skype, Viber or Signal. These can be



downloaded in either the App Store (iPhone) or the Play Store (Android). Both patient and visitor will need to download the same application. Access to guest wi-fi at Ascension Wisconsin facilities is available by connecting to AH-Guest.

The updated restricted visitation policy at Ascension Wisconsin also includes the following:

- All visitors, associates, clinicians and vendors entering Ascension Wisconsin facilities will be screened for flu-like symptoms including fever, cough, runny nose/nasal congestion and or sore throat.
- No visitors who screen positive for cough, fever or difficulty breathing will be permitted into the facility.
- To implement this, Ascension Wisconsin facilities will be implementing minimized entrance points as needed.
- Visitors under the age of 18 will not be permitted.

We appreciate the community's support in adhering to these guidelines, as we continue to care for people who are most in need during these unprecedented times.

#### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Donations Now Being Accepted by Ascension Wisconsin**

Ascension Wisconsin is now accepting donations for personal protective equipment. Individuals or companies interested in making a donation should contact Ascension Wisconsin's Foundation partners at [AscensionWIFoundations@ascension.org](mailto:AscensionWIFoundations@ascension.org). Once the donation is confirmed, arrangements will be made to pick up the donation and deliver it to the appropriate Ascension Wisconsin facility.

Supplies being requested for donation:

- Isolation Gowns
- Earloop or Tie Masks
- N95 Respirators
- Hand Sanitizers
- Face Shields
- Surface disinfectants
- Powered Air Purifying Respirators (PAPR)
- Controlled Air Purifying Respirators (CAPR)
- Other approved PPE supplies advised by the CDC

**Please, do not drop-off PPE donations at Ascension Wisconsin facilities.** The Ascension Wisconsin Foundation team will work directly with individuals and companies to assess each donation.

At this time, Ascension Wisconsin cannot accept donations that are handmade (ex: sewn face masks) and is working with local and state health officials to determine if such items could be an option in the future. Ascension Wisconsin is following the updated CDC guidelines regarding suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). The safety of our patients, associates and providers is our utmost priority as we all work to slow the transmission of COVID-19 and care for all those in need.

**Ascension Wisconsin Toll-Free Information Line:**



Ascension Wisconsin has established a dedicated telephone resource for COVID-19 questions. This can be accessed 24/7 by calling **1-833-981-0711**. The launch of this service is intended to provide useful information to people in the communities we are privileged to serve who have questions about COVID-19. The hotline is an effort to reduce the number of incoming calls to our hospitals and clinics. We ask that this resource only be used for questions about COVID-19 and its symptoms. If you are experiencing a medical emergency, please dial 9-1-1.

### **What should people do if they think they may have symptoms or have been exposed to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?**

Anyone who believes they may have had contact with someone who is confirmed to have, or is being evaluated for, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), should **contact their physician**.

To help prevent the spread of disease, the CDC recommends that individuals **call ahead before going to a doctor's office or emergency room** and inform clinical staff about symptoms and any recent travel. Our healthcare professionals will work with public health and CDC to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19.

### **Consider Virtual Care**

During this time, with many individuals who may be working from home, or who have children who are at home and out of school, or individuals who are working shifts at various times of day that may make it difficult to take off work to see a doctor, it may be a good time to consider 'virtual care' — an option for patients with low-acuity, urgent care issues who would like a virtual visit with a provider using the mobile device of their choice, smartphone, laptop or tablet.

Ascension Online Care offers visits with a doctor 24/7 from work, travel or home. Use code HOME for a discounted \$20 visit during the month of March. Download the app at [www.ascension.org/onlinecare](http://www.ascension.org/onlinecare). Available in all 50 states. No insurance required.