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Communication Key Component of Hospitals' Coronavirus Preparedness

Hauppauge, NY (February 27, 2020) Long Island's hospitals are closely watching the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) situation and are prepared to handle any cases that might appear in this region. As of 2/26/20, there are no confirmed cases on Long Island or in [New York State](#). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)), there are 14 confirmed cases in the United States. Hospitals in the region remain vigilant and are prepared to handle any patient who presents with coronavirus. All facilities follow strict infectious disease protocols that begin with immediately isolating the patient so that staff and the public are kept safe.

Hospitals learned many lessons about containing an infectious disease during the Ebola outbreak in 2014. With one confirmed Ebola case in New York State and only a handful of other cases noted in the United States, the CDC, state health departments, and local county health departments lost no time in preparing for more widespread disease occurrence. This positioned them well to deal with the current coronavirus and other novel and emerging infectious diseases. Today, in every hospital emergency department, patients are asked whether they returned from recent travel outside the United States regardless if there is a current pandemic in place. This is standard practice. The New York State Health Department also requires hospitals to hold surprise emergency preparedness drills on a regular basis.

Since the emergence of COVID-19, hospital staff have been in constant communication with the CDC, the state health department, and their local county health departments to ensure they have the most up-to-date information about the spread of the disease and that proper infectious disease control procedures and methods are in place. At the local level, hospitals and the broader healthcare community also keep in touch. In Suffolk County, the Suffolk County ESF 8 Group (Emergency Support Function) works cooperatively to keep tabs on regional supplies and personnel resources. In Nassau County, that task falls to the Health and Medical Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (HMMACG).

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About the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council (NSHC)

The [Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council](#) represents the not-for-profit and public hospitals on Long Island. It works in conjunction with the [Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State](#) to advance legislative and regulatory priorities. NSHC serves as the local and collective voice of hospitals on Long Island.