Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State, LLC

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Flu Season Arrived Early, Hospitals Intensify Prevention Efforts

Vaccination and facemasks part of effort to combat virus and keep related ER visits at bay

(Hauppauge, NY – November 10, 2026) Flu season has arrived early in New York State. Influenza or flu virus was declared prevalent by the New York State Health Commissioner on October 26, 2026, and hospitals on Long Island and throughout the Mid-Hudson Valley are taking additional steps to prevent the spread of flu, including enhanced efforts to vaccinate all employees and distribution of surgical facemasks. Worn by employees, masks offer a physical barrier to flu transmission. This is a comprehensive endeavor to protect patients, visitors, and employees from exposure to the flu virus, and to reduce flu-related hospital emergency room visits.

This year's declaration of flu prevalence by the health commissioner came earlier than usual and triggers the public health law that was put in place by the state in 2013. Employees of hospitals and healthcare and residential healthcare facilities and agencies who are not vaccinated against the flu are required to wear a mask while in areas where patients or residents are typically present.

While an annual flu vaccine remains the single best method for preventing the flu, a surgical facemask, worn by employees, provides added protection to patients, employees, and visitors. All hospitals on Long Island and in the Hudson Valley offer the flu vaccine to all employees and also provide employees with surgical facemasks, as required by New York State public health law.

As a matter of standard practice, all Long Island and Hudson Valley hospitals enforce universally recognized precautions to prevent the flu. These include hand washing, the use of hand sanitizers placed conveniently throughout the hospital, as well as goggles and gowns. In addition, all hospitals adhere to rigorous infection control guidelines and policies every day to ensure a clean environment for patients, staff, and visitors. These practices are especially important during flu season. Antiseptic wipes are located in patient rooms, workstations, hallways, and other treatment areas and are easily accessible to hospital employees responsible for sanitizing medical equipment and surface areas.

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"Flu prevention is a priority at all hospitals on Long Island and in the Hudson Valley, especially with the season starting so early this year. Hospital employees work every day to lessen the spread of flu virus by adhering to strict infection control practices and prevention guidelines," said Wendy Darwell, president/CEO of the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State, the organization that represents hospitals in the nine counties east and north of New York City. "Hospitals, nursing homes, and other facilities must also document the number and percentage of personnel vaccinated against the flu to state and federal authorities."

The Suburban Hospital Alliance has launched a Winter Vaccination Resources campaign to encourage eligible New Yorkers to stay well and protect their seasonal plans by getting vaccinated against flu, COVID-19, and RSV if eligible. Most hospitals offer flu shot clinics. For more information about these services, please call the local hospital.

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About the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State

The Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State advocates on behalf of hospitals in the Hudson Valley and Long Island regions. It engages key lawmakers and regulatory decision-makers in Albany and Washington to ensure reasonable and rational health care policy prevails.

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.

About the Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association (NorMet)

The Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association represents the not-for-profit and public hospitals in the Hudson Valley region. It works in conjunction with the Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State to advance legislative and regulatory priorities. NorMet serves as the local and collective voice of hospitals in the Hudson Valley.

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