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CONFLUENCE HEALTH ANNOUNCES CHANGES TO MASKING POLICY FOR PATIENTS AND VISITORS

Wenatchee, WA: Confluence Health today announced updates to its masking policy. Starting Monday, April 3, 2023, masking will now be optional for patients and visitors while in Confluence Health facilities. Patients and visitors will still be recommended to mask to help protect the most vulnerable patients, but this will no longer be a requirement for entry.

However, Confluence Health will not be making changes to its masking requirements for staff and providers at this time. Masking will continue to be required in clinical areas and areas generally accessible to the public, including common hallways, for all Confluence Health employees.

“This policy update considers the changes to the Washington State Department of Health masking requirement, discussions with many health systems throughout the state, and guidance from our regional health districts,” remarked Dr. Jason Lake, chief medical officer for Confluence Health. “Through this, we are taking into account both the changing needs of the post-pandemic world and continued protection of our patients.”

The updates announced by Confluence Health come as a response to several COVID-19 and masking policy changes at various government levels which are scheduled to occur starting next week. [The Washington State Department of Health \(DOH\) announced](#) that mask requirements in healthcare facilities are changing beginning April 3, 2023. [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) has also announced](#) that, due to the federal government’s decision to the end the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) on May 11, 2023, the CDC will be issuing additional guidance at that time. Finally, the [Washington State Department of Labor and Industries announced plans](#) to expire the requirements for the Public Health Emergency Reporting and Notification (HELSA) and Voluntary Use of PPE on the same day.

“Over the course of the next few weeks between now and May 11, 2023, we expect to receive additional guidance which the Confluence Health leadership team will use to further tailor masking policy as needed,” continued Lake. “Until that time, we will proceed in a way that protects our most vulnerable patients. We are pleased, however, to be at a point in our efforts surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic where we are able to make this important update to our policies for our patients and their families.”

About Confluence Health

Confluence Health serves the largest geographic region of any healthcare system in Washington State, covering over 12,000 square miles of Okanogan, Grant, Douglas, and Chelan counties. Confluence is one of only two locally-lead healthcare systems in the state with the purpose of maintaining availability and access to high-quality, cost-effective healthcare services for North Central Washington. The Confluence Health Board of Directors provides governance for Confluence Health, the Clinic, Central Washington Hospital, and Wenatchee Valley Hospital, and includes nine community board members and six physician board members.

For More Information

Katie Grove, *Marketing & Communications Director*

katharine.grove@ConfluenceHealth.org

509-885-0444

Adam MacDonald, *Corporate Communications Program Manager*

adam.macdonald@ConfluenceHealth.org

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