

## HURON PERTH HEALTHCARE ALLIANCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **St. Marys Memorial Hospital Closed to Admissions *Gastrointestinal Outbreak Continues at St. Marys Memorial Hospital***

A gastrointestinal (gastro) illness hit the Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance (HPHA) – St. Marys Memorial Hospital this week, and due to the continued outbreak the hospital is now closed to admissions.

“In an effort to control and eliminate this outbreak, no new patients are being admitted to the hospital,” says Andrew Williams, HPHA President & CEO.

The exact cause of this outbreak has not yet been identified, but is likely caused by a virus. Gastro, also known as the stomach flu, causes an infection in the stomach and intestines called gastroenteritis. Viral outbreaks like this are not uncommon this type of year in care facilities or hospitals. It should be noted this infection is not caused by the influenza (flu) virus.

“Patients with common symptoms are being cared for in an area separate from patients who are not symptomatic and common areas have been restricted,” says Janice McIntyre, Infection Control Practitioner. “Staff who are caring for the patients who are ill are not working with patients who have not shown symptoms.”

Visitors are still welcome but are asked to follow any posted instructions and are asked to limit their interaction to one patient per visit. Those visiting infected patients will be required to wear gloves and gowns and must discard these before leaving the patient’s room. Visitors should also use the hand sanitizer provided to wash their hands when they enter the hospital and upon leaving the patient’s room.

Visitors are also reminded that if they aren’t feeling well, they should postpone their visit to at least 48 hours after symptoms clear.

#### More Information about Gastro

- Most individuals with gastro infection will experience one to three days of nausea, vomiting, and watery diarrhea. Other symptoms may include fever, headache, and stomach cramps.
- Hand washing is key to stop the spread of gastro. Wash your hands often and avoid touching your mouth.
- Gastro infections have been linked to outbreaks of vomiting and/or diarrhea in day nurseries, schools, long term care homes, cruise ships, camps, dormitories, restaurants, households and other places where people gather in groups.
- A person who is ill with a gastro infection is most often able to spread the virus 48 hours before they show any symptoms and up to 48 hours after the symptoms subside.



**For more information please contact:**

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