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**United Hospital District Recommends Face Masks at Facility;
Seeks Donations of Handmade Cloth Face Masks**

Blue Earth, MN – April 17, 2020 – Effective no later than May 1st and based on updated guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), United Hospital District (UHD) recommends everyone who enters the Blue Earth facility be masked. This new measure is in line with other healthcare facilities and will help with source control for the community.

According to UHD Infection Control Officer Raina Juba, RN, anyone who needs to visit UHD and already has their own face mask is asked to arrive wearing their own mask. Persons arriving at UHD without a mask will be provided one by UHD based on their health status. Anyone determined to be symptomatic will be given a hospital grade mask and individuals considered asymptomatic will be provided a handmade cloth mask.

“UHD has an adequate supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) on hand to protect its employees and patients from COVID-19.” said Mrs. Juba. “However, the global supply for this equipment continues to be uncertain and we are actively taking steps to secure more supplies.”

To that end, UHD is now accepting donations of handmade cloth face masks, which may be provided to staff and/or patients. Donors are asked to refer to the Minnesota Department of Health website at www.health.state.mn.us or CDC website at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus for guidance regarding pattern and material. All donated masks will be laundered before distribution. UHD has set up donation boxes inside the entrance doors to the hospital and the Blue Earth Clinic. Anyone wishing to donate may simply place their handmade masks in the donation boxes, which are accessible 8:00 a.m. to 10 p.m. and will be monitored by UHD staff.

UHD is working in partnership with Community Health and Human Services of Faribault and Martin Counties (CHHSFMC), which is also collecting and distributing cloth masks to those in need at no cost. Masks donated to UHD will be primarily distributed to UHD staff and patients but may also be used to supplement need from CHHSFMC.

UHD, located in Blue Earth, MN, is a system of care comprised of a 25-bed acute care hospital, comprehensive outpatient services, ambulance service and home health/hospice care all supported by a 20-plus multi-specialty provider group with four clinic locations across two counties.

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