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### **Joint Statement on Increased COVID-19 Hospitalizations**

**Oct. 2, 2020** – Our regional health systems are continuing to see an increase in COVID-19 related hospitalizations and patients testing positive, particularly in the last few weeks. We have been working hard for the last six months to prepare for this surge, and we continue to provide quality, safe care for our communities.

The numbers of COVID-19 cases and positivity rates have been rising across the Midwest. To help meet this challenge, we must work together as a community to take the steps we know can reduce the spread of COVID-19. Following the guidance of public health agencies by wearing a face covering, practicing social distancing, washing your hands, avoiding high-risk situations and staying home while sick, can all make a big difference in the health of our communities.

We stand with public health officials in their educational efforts around these basic and essential measures as they work tirelessly to keep our communities safe. Now is not the time for any of us to become complacent. We are far from being clear of danger.

In addition, it is more important than ever to get your flu shot. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend all people six months and older get flu vaccinations to protect themselves and others from getting the flu.

We have the power to turn things around. We need everyone to take this seriously to slow the spread. Wash your hands, watch your distance, wear masks while in public and get your flu shot. If we all do this, we can protect ourselves, our families and our neighbors.