

NEWS

Entering the ER in Current Times



[An area has been set up outside Canton-Potsdam Hospital's Emergency Department for staff to don and doff their personal protective equipment.]

POTSDAM, NY - In this time of anxiety and uncertainty, St. Lawrence Health System wants you to know our Emergency Departments are open for you, and we are here to care for you safely.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 and are concerned about what that means for you, please reach out to your provider, or call our HOTLINE at (315) 261-6240.

If you are experiencing a medical emergency, with or without symptoms of COVID-19, Canton-Potsdam Hospital's Emergency Department Chair Dr. Julie Vieth, MBChB, FAAEM, FACEP, wants you to know you will be seen, and kept safe at Canton-Potsdam, Gouverneur, and Massena hospital emergency departments.



"We have designated sections in each of our Emergency Departments to keep you safe, keep your family safe, and keep our staff safe. Using personal protective equipment and special negative pressure rooms, we are able to keep our patient populations separate from one another, so if you don't have symptoms of COVID-19 and need to seek care, we can keep you safe as well," she said.

"Please, if you need to seek care, don't sit at home waiting. When you arrive in the Emergency Department you will be screened, asked questions about travel, being in contact with someone with COVID-19, or if you have a fever, cough, or shortness of breath," Dr. Vieth explained.

Patients should not be afraid when asked those questions, and should be honest with their answers. The questions are to ensure their safety, the safety of their families, other patients, and staff, as it is vitally important to not cross-contaminate patient populations.

"Your emergency care will continue to be our priority. Care may take place in one of our special respiratory isolation rooms where we will evaluate you, and complete our testing. From there, we will

determine if your condition is stable for you to be discharged home, or if you need to be admitted to the hospital,” Dr. Vieth said.

While the Emergency Departments at Canton-Potsdam, Gouverneur, and Massena hospitals are prepared to care for individuals who need immediate attention, Canton-Potsdam Hospital has been designated as the System’s hub to care for patients who need ongoing hospitalization with symptoms of or confirmed COVID-19.

“Right now there is a real fear about being admitted to the hospital due to the potential infection risk of COVID-19. However, we have separated our units in the hospital into areas for COVID-19, suspect patients, and patients who may not have any symptoms of COVID-19 but need to come into the hospital for another reason,” Dr. Vieth said of Canton-Potsdam Hospital.

“We want you to know we view your safety as our utmost priority. If you are taken to a hospital room, you may be taken down a pathway that is unfamiliar, and again we have mapped all of this out for you – to keep you safe, and to keep our staff safe,” she continued.

While in the hospital, patients may see a number of staff members wearing masks, gowns, or other types of personal protective equipment. “We are doing that because we know what the risk is of COVID-19, and as healthcare workers, we have taken an oath to protect you, and to take care of you,” Dr. Vieth said.

“At this time, we hope you are washing your hands, self-isolating, and taking this time to be with family,” she noted.

View Dr. Vieth’s short video about this topic at <https://www.stlawrencehealthsystem.org/you-heard-it-hear>.