



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Medina Healthcare System Prepared for COVID-19**

Medina County, Texas – March 5, 2020 -- Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a novel (new) strain of the usual coronavirus seen seasonally. While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has said the immediate risk to the American public is low at this time, the CDC also said the U.S. should prepare for possible disruptions to daily life. Medina Healthcare System, in collaboration with the county and state health authorities are working tirelessly to ensure our community is prepared for not only the current state of the virus but also any future spread of COVID-19 throughout our community.

Overall preparedness efforts include reinforcing appropriate infection prevention protocols, helping to ensure we have needed supplies and equipment and staffing contingency plans.

“We know the community is looking at us to keep them safe and healthy. We have comprehensive safety measures in place to ensure a safe work environment for our staff and safe hospital for our patients and visitors during this high alert,” stated Janice Simons, CEO of Medina Healthcare System. “We have an Infection Prevention Department and senior leaders who are working with the Southwest Texas Regional Advisory Council and our partner, Methodist Healthcare, to further discuss preparedness within the hospital setting and community. In addition, Medina Healthcare System’s partnership with Methodist Healthcare system allows us access to HealthTrust – a large medical supply group that can supply necessary personal protective equipment to our staff,” added Simons.

In the event Medina Healthcare System would admit a patient who tests positive with COVID-19, the hospital is equipped with a negative pressure room and its staff has been properly trained in emergency management situations, with an escalation plan that calls for appropriate resources, as needed. The CDC guidelines are also being followed for preparedness.

Medina county and surrounding areas have a low immediate health risk from COVID-19 with its overall mortality rate being lower than the influenza. “We need to remind our community that this hospital treats patients every day with far more dangerous and deadly respiratory illnesses such as influenza, which has already caused 19 million

illnesses, 180,000 hospitalizations and 10,000 deaths this season in the U.S alone,” states (Matt Windrow, MD), Chief of Staff for Medina Healthcare System.

The community members can protect their own health by remembering those actions that we should always take:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Stay home when you are sick
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue
- Practice good hand hygiene by washing your hands often, using either soap and water or alcohol-based hand gel for at least 20 seconds
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Follow all guidance on appropriate Personal Protective Equipment use for all patients
- Engage with Infection Prevention early if there are any questions

For more information, please visit:

- CDC COVID-19 page: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- Department of State Health Services Coronavirus Call Center at 1.877.570.9779.