

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Visitor guidance updated at Salina, Abilene hospitals due to increasing respiratory illnesses

(January 16, 2026) – In an effort to protect patients, visitors and employees due to increased prevalence of respiratory illness across the region, Salina Regional Health Center and Memorial Hospital – Abilene implemented new visitor guidance at the hospitals effective today, January 16, until further notice.

“We’ve been seeing high numbers of patients with influenza, COVID and other respiratory illnesses across our health system and across the state, which necessitates we start communicating our visitor guidance,” said Bethanie McDowell, VP Patient Care/Chief Nursing Officer at Salina Regional Health Center. “These changes are aimed at protecting patients, visitors and staff.”

“The health and safety of our patients, staff and community is always our top priority,” said Kim Haverly, Memorial Health System Administrator. “These temporary visitor guidelines are just a proactive step to reduce the spread of illness and ensure that we continue to provide safe, high-quality care to our patients. We appreciate the understanding while we work together to protect one another.”

The updated guidance and safety precautions apply:

- DO NOT visit if you are ill or have any signs and symptoms of respiratory illness including cough, runny nose, fever, sore throat, muscle aches or fatigue.
- Children age 12 and under should not visit inpatients.

Continued

- People with compromised immune systems or pulmonary complications should visit only if absolutely necessary.
- Masks are available at hospital entrances for all who wish to wear one.
- Visitors should wash their hands or use hand sanitizer prior to entering a patient room and prior to leaving the facility.
- Compassionate exceptions to these restrictions will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

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