

## CONFLUENCE HEALTH CONSOLIDATES PCUs TO BETTER ENSURE SUSTAINABLE PATIENT SERVICES

**Wenatchee, WA:** By November 7<sup>th</sup>, Confluence Health will consolidate their Progressive Care Unit (PCU) services within Central Washington Hospital. Unlike intensive care units (ICUs), PCUs are intermediate levels of care and work with patients who are more stable or do not require as much demanding care as an ICU patient. PCU services currently provided on the first floor, commonly referred to as PC1, will be suspended and any patients that would have received care on that floor will now receive their care in other PCU areas within the hospital.

“As many people are aware of from reports issued by groups such as the Washington State Hospital Association (WSHA), many healthcare systems have seen the need for travelers increase dramatically over the past two years. Travelers, who are temporary staff, have been increasingly needed for day-to-day operations, not just at Confluence Health but across the country,” remarked Dr. Jason Lake, chief medical officer for Confluence Health. “Because of the temporary nature of the position, travelers are much more costly than permanent staff. This PCU consolidation effort will allow Confluence Health to reduce our reliance on travelers, which will result in significant cost savings. At the same time, we can utilize our permanent staff to continue delivering outstanding care to patients.”

According to a [media briefing held on October 4<sup>th</sup> by WSHA](#), losses for hospital and health systems as a whole in Washington State grew to \$1.7 billion as of the first half of 2022. One of the significant components of these losses is the need to employ travelers due to staffing shortages. This greater demand, in turn, has driven the cost of travelers up dramatically. Confluence Health’s announcement addresses this significant financial concern to allow the organization to maintain the commitment to excellent care which has always been the foremost priority.

“It is important to note that the impact to patient care in our region will be minimal and this consolidation is not expected or intended to hinder our ability to perform surgery or procedures, or to provide emergency services for our region. Those excellent services are not going anywhere,” commented Dr. Andrew Jones, CEO for Confluence Health. “Instead, this effort helps to ensure that Confluence Health remains on sound, sustainable financial footing by responding appropriately to this area of increased expense with changes that allow us to continue to provide the healthcare services that our communities expect and deserve in a cost-effective manner.”

Despite the consolidation, there are no plans for layoffs among permanent staff and providers at Confluence Health. Instead, current employees will be reassigned to work in the remaining areas of Central Washington Hospital which provide PCU services.

“Though this was a hard decision to make, this effort helps us to make meaningful progress to address some financial challenges,” continued Jones. “I am proud that we will be able to pivot in this way without any reduction in our permanent staff positions, and while keeping our commitment to patient care at the heart of all we do.”

### About Confluence Health

Confluence Health serves the largest geographic region of any healthcare system in Washington State, covering over 12,000 square miles of Okanogan, Grant, Douglas, and Chelan counties. Confluence is one of only two locally-lead

healthcare systems in the state with the purpose of maintaining availability and access to high-quality, cost-effective healthcare services for North Central Washington. The Confluence Health Board of Directors provides governance for Confluence Health, the Clinic, Central Washington Hospital, and Wenatchee Valley Hospital, and includes nine community board members and six physician board members.

**For More Information**

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