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**CONFLUENCE HEALTH EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS ASK RESIDENTS TO  
HELP PRIORITIZE PATIENTS WITH SEVERE ILLNESS**

**Wenatchee, WA:** Due to high volumes of community members seeking care in emergency departments, patients are experiencing longer than normal wait times. Far from being only a local issue, this is a state and national challenge that all hospital systems are currently experiencing.

“With the sharp increase in the number of patients seeking care in our emergency departments, patients with less severe illness sometimes are asked to wait significantly longer than normal while priority is given first to patients with life-threatening conditions,” commented Dr. Jason Lake, chief medical officer for Confluence Health. “We want to keep patients informed about these longer-than-usual wait times and thank them for their understanding as our staff and providers work tirelessly to care for patients with the most severe illness first.”

Emergency departments across the state and the nation are experiencing longer wait times as they navigate caring for the high volumes of patients with influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and other respiratory infections that have surged the last few months, and especially in recent weeks. While these conditions can sometimes develop into illness that requires immediate medical care, very often mild cases can be treated at home with bedrest and over-the-counter medications.

“It is essential that our communities remember that we will not turn away anyone seeking care,” continued Lake. “That said, our capacity issues are a real challenge, and longer wait times are inevitable at this time. We are dedicated to providing care to all those in need and appreciate our communities understanding the challenges that we and other hospitals throughout the state are experiencing.”

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