News

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Commissioner

For Release:
May 5, 2020

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N.J. Department of Health, N.J. Hospital Association PSA Aimed at Reassuring Public on Hospital Safety Amid COVID-19

Emergency Departments Open and Safe, Officials Say

TRENTON – The New Jersey Department of Health and the New Jersey Hospital Association (NJHA) have produced a joint Public Service Announcement (PSA) targeting residents who may suffer a potential heart attack or stroke and might be reluctant to go to hospital Emergency Departments due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The PSA, which features Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli and NJHA President and CEO Cathy Bennett, was made following reports that residents may be delaying needed health care that they require because of concerns of hospital safety and capacity amid coronavirus.

Hospitals report anecdotally that inpatient admissions are down anywhere from 20 to 40 percent compared with pre-COVID activity.

"Our hospitals have been safe havens for all who have walked in their doors for over a century," Health Commissioner Persichilli said in the PSA. "So I urge you, do not delay going to your local emergency room if you are experiencing signs and symptoms of a heart attack or stroke. I can assure you that are hospitals and emergency rooms are safe and waiting - waiting and ready to care for you."

The PSA, will be promoted through a robust social media campaign and is also available on YouTube at: https://youtu.be/aUDfZnI1WG4**.**

“Hospitals remain open throughout the COVID-19 emergency, with special precautions in place to protect patients,” said NJHA’s Bennett. “If you are experiencing a health emergency, please don't delay in going to the ED or calling 911. Hospitals and their healthcare teams continue to care for all patients in a safe environment.”

Heart attack and stroke risks can vary by age, gender and heredity including race. Shared risk factors for heart attack and stroke can include high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, smoking, high cholesterol, physical inactivity and heart disease.

Residents are reminded that signs of a stroke can include:

- Face drooping
- Arm weakness or numbness
- Slurred speech or difficulty speaking
- Sudden confusion and trouble seeing

Signs of a heart attack can include:

- Chest pain or pressure
- Pain or discomfort in arms, back, neck, jaw or stomach
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea or lightheadedness

For more warning signs, visit nj.gov/health/fhs/chronic/heart-disease-stroke/

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Last Reviewed: 5/5/2020