



## For Immediate Release

Friday January 13, 2012

### **STEGH Managing Outbreak with Visitors' Co-operation**

**St. Thomas, ON** - An outbreak of gastrointestinal illness (symptoms include vomiting, nausea and diarrhea) has been confirmed in the Continuing Care Centre (CCC) C and D Units at the St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital (STEGH). The Hospital has been working closely with Elgin St. Thomas Public Health to manage the situation and precautions are in place in CCC to minimize the spread of illness. Currently, five patients have gastrointestinal symptoms related to this outbreak.

To minimize the spread of infection, CCC is closed to all visitors until the outbreak is declared over.

While the visiting restrictions are in place only for CCC, it is essential that all visitors use the liquid hand sanitizer before and after visiting. Careful hand hygiene is critical to manage the spread of infection. All visitors are also reminded to delay their visit for 48 hours if they are sick or have other family members with any illness. Illness can often spread before symptoms are obvious, so if it is in your household, you may be transmitting it to others.

The Hospital's main concern is for the safety and well being of patients, visitors, staff and volunteers, and is taking every precaution to ensure this.

"We are confident we are doing everything possible to contain this outbreak and to protect our patients and staff," states Anna Hunt, Infection Control Specialist at the St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital. "Our staff are well trained to identify trends immediately and step up precautions, which are often put in place even before a diagnosis is made, based on the patients' symptoms. We have found the sooner precautions are in place, the better control we have over reducing the potential for spread to other areas of the Hospital."

Both Public Health and STEGH will closely monitor the situation for any need to revise these temporary precautions.

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