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**STATEMENT FROM THE WEST VIRGINIA HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
REGARDING ON-GOING HOSPITAL READINESS RELATED TO CORONAVIRUS
(COVID-19)**

CHARLESTON, WV – Joe Letnaunchyn, President and CEO of the West Virginia Hospital Association (WVHA), provides the following statement regarding on-going West Virginia hospital readiness efforts related to COVID-19:

West Virginia hospitals and health systems are closely monitoring developments related to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and are working diligently with state and federal agencies to educate and train their staffs to prepare for the possibility of cases in West Virginia.

- Each West Virginia hospital has an established primary and secondary Hospital Emergency Preparedness (EP) Coordinator. The coordinators within each hospital are receiving frequent, if not daily, updates and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Hospital Association (AHA) and the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) and Bureau for Public Health (BPH) with instruction to share information within their hospital.
- An Emergency Preparedness staff housed at the WVHA is helping to coordinate and facilitate this information to our hospitals and health systems in West Virginia, as it becomes available.
- WVHA is an active participant in the State's emergency response efforts led by the DHHR and involving the Governor's Office and the State Homeland Security Department, among many others.
- West Virginia hospital team members have been actively engaged in local coordination meetings led by county Public Health Departments to plan for healthcare and community

response. These meetings have also included long term care and other healthcare providers in the community.

We recognize the concerns of our communities, staff and patients when dealing with any infectious disease and have confidence in our hospitals' readiness efforts. West Virginia hospitals have plans in place to address all hazards that could impact the facility and its ability to provide care. These plans follow the state Office of Health Facility Licensure and Certification (OHFLAC) guidelines. The plans include response to infectious disease and the process for communicating to the public about the hospital status. Most hospitals have extensive plans and training protocols for a High Impact Pathogen such as COVID-19 due to past Pandemic Influenza and Ebola Disease planning. OHFLAC reviews these plans annually.

Hospitals recommend that the public follow the same precautions recommended to prevent spread of flu and the common cold to help prevent spread of COVID-19. Being proactive by following [CDC recommendations to help prevent illness](#) will help reduce the burden on our hospitals and healthcare delivery system in West Virginia.

Collaboration and communication within West Virginia's healthcare community is vital to our state's on-going readiness efforts. The WVHA is continually providing updated guidance to hospitals from state and national agencies. Our commitment is to the health and wellness of our patients, staff and communities, and we will continue to work together to ensure we are as prepared as possible to provide care should cases of COVID-19 develop in West Virginia.

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The West Virginia Hospital Association (WVHA) is a not-for-profit statewide organization representing 62 hospitals and health systems across the continuum of care. The WVHA was founded in 1925 to serve as the collective voice of the state's hospital community. Today, the mission of the WVHA is to support its members in achieving a strong, healthy West Virginia. Members of the Association envision a strong healthcare system that supports optimizing the health status of West Virginians served by hospitals and improving the economic condition of the state. The values of quality, transparency, integrity, collaboration and innovation guide the actions of the Association so that member hospitals and health systems can provide high-quality, affordable, accessible healthcare for West Virginia families and communities. The Association is proud to be a part of the state's hospital industry, adding value to the health and wellness of West Virginians. In addition to representing hospitals and health systems, the WVHA includes associate member organizations that partner with West Virginia's hospitals.