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HELP KEEP EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS FREE FOR EMERGENCIES

Telehealth Can Address Many Health Care Concerns

TORONTO – This holiday season, Ontarians can help keep emergency departments free for emergencies by calling Telehealth Ontario for most of their health care concerns.

“You can get the right health care advice by phoning Telehealth, and possibly saving yourself a trip to the doctor’s office or a hospital emergency department,” said George Smitherman, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Telehealth Ontario is a free confidential telephone service that connects you to a registered nurse, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

When you call Telehealth Ontario, you will be asked to describe your symptoms and answer questions to best assess the seriousness of the problem. Nurses can help direct you to the appropriate health care option – including taking care of yourself at home, seeing your doctor or going to the local emergency department. The service is available in English and French and also has translation services for over 110 different languages.

To stay healthy during the holiday season remember these important tips:

- Get your free flu shot. This will help keep hospitals, and specifically emergency departments, available for real emergencies should you need them
- Make sure you have a sufficient supply of your regular medications as store hours are often reduced during the holiday season
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly
- Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing, with a tissue or with your upper sleeve. Do not cough or sneeze into your hands
- Use routine infection control practices and additional precautions as required to prevent infection transmission.

To contact Telehealth Ontario for health advice or information, call 1-866-797-0000 (TTY 1-866-797-0007).

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