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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Clean Hands are a Partnership

At Cottage Hospital your safety is our first priority. Hand Hygiene is the single most important hospital procedure for preventing the spread of infection to you, the patient. In fact, it is so important that several governmental and professional agencies list Hand Hygiene in their quality guidelines. These same organizations encourage patients to assume more responsibility for their healthcare by asking healthcare workers if they have cleaned their hands. Asking your doctor, nurse, aide and other healthcare workers if they have cleaned their hands is a new concept to many patients that may, at first, make you uneasy. We want you to feel comfortable being an advocate for your own health and well being.

Why is hand hygiene important?

Germs that cause infections can be spread in a number of ways. The most common is through hands. Hand Hygiene removes germs from the hands and helps protect YOU, the patient, from infection.

When and Where should you ask?

Ask the question any time your doctor, nurse, or healthcare worker is about to examine you, give you medication, do a treatment or touch things that are used in your care.

Don't be shy!

All of us, sooner or later, are patients or have loved ones who are patients. Don't be intimidated to ask about Hand Hygiene; there is too much at stake. Just because the germs can't be seen doesn't mean they aren't there. Just because hands look clean doesn't mean they are. Studies show that patient reminders to healthcare workers about Hand Hygiene work. So, don't be shy, ask.

To learn more about how hand hygiene saves lives, please visit the Association for Professional in Infection Control and Epidemiology (www.apic.org), the Centers for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov) and the Safe Care Campaign (www.safecarecampaign.org) and remember we want you to feel comfortable, so please do not hesitate to ask... "Have you washed your hands?"

Cottage Hospital is a 25 bed, critical access hospital serving the beautiful Upper Connecticut River Valley. For additional information regarding Cottage Hospital and any of our services, visit us on the web at www.cottagehospital.org, or call (603)747-9000.

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