

Flu, illness and snowstorm injuries lead to South Jersey patient surge, hospital says

NICOLE LEONARD Staff Writer

The health provider, a member of Pennsylvania-based Geisinger Health System, operates locations and services in Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May and southern Ocean counties.

AtlantiCare's Special Care centers in Atlantic City and Galloway Township, which usually treat adult patients with multiple chronic conditions, will now take patients of all ages who do not have a primary care provider or pediatrician for minor illnesses.

The locations, as well as AtlantiCare Health Services at the William L. Gormley AtlantiCare HealthPlex in Atlantic City, will take patients regardless of type of insurance or lack of coverage during the patient surge timeframe, officials said.

Dr. Thomas Brabson, chairman of emergency services at AtlantiCare, said people experiencing symptoms of minor illness or flu-like symptoms should first try their primary care doctor for health care.

"The exception would be those who are at risk for complications, including seniors, babies and young children, and those with a chronic condition such as diabetes, COPD or heart failure," he said.

People should call 911 if they experience symptoms of a stroke or a heart attack, which include sudden, severe headache, trouble with balance, walking or seeing, face drooping, weakness in one or both arms, difficulty speaking, chest discomfort, discomfort in areas of the upper body and/or shortness of breath.

"Other symptoms could include breaking out in a cold sweat and/or experiencing nausea or lightheadedness," Brabson said.

For more information, call 888-569-1000 or call the AtlantiCare Urgent Care sites directly at 609-407-2273.