



PRESS RELEASE

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SEASONAL INFECTIONS

The GHA is currently experiencing very high rates of attendance both at the Primary Care Centre and in the Accident & Emergency Department at St Bernard's Hospital due to a surge in Flu and other winter related illnesses. This year, reported cases of Influenza and flu-like illnesses have been extremely high in December and January to date.

There is no single type of flu that has dominated, but there appears to be a mixed pattern. Although the numbers of patients has not reached epidemic levels, they can still cause bottlenecks on health services. In this, the public can do much to help, by taking care of themselves and by actions to reduce the burden of illness on society.

Part of the problem is the use of emergency services by individuals for minor ailments. A Hospital Spokesperson stated "Hospital Emergency departments are for serious conditions, but we are encountering patients with minor illnesses. We are introducing a protocol whereby patients who come to the accident and emergency departments unnecessarily are re-directed to more appropriate services, freeing up time for doctors and nurses to see emergency cases."

The GHA is doing its best under the circumstances, jointly with the Care Agency, to create the necessary resilience, and asks for help from the public.

The GHA Public Health department will be carrying out a campaign of educating the public on self-care and infection prevention. In the meantime a guide has been produced "Health Services: How You Can Help", which is attached to this press release.