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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **HABERSHAM MEDICAL CENTER IMPLEMENTS “NO VISITORS” STANCE FOR NURSING HOME**

Habersham Medical Center (HMC) and Habersham Home are committed to protecting our patients and residents in our facilities.

As concerns continue to escalate with the emerging 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and given the vulnerabilities associated with the elderly and those with compromised immune systems, HMC and Habersham Home are taking a very aggressive and proactive approach in preventing against exposure to the virus through intense awareness, education, screening, monitoring and appropriate prevention management.

With this in mind and in adherence to guidance provided by the American Health Care Association (AHCA), the National Center for Assisted Living (NCAL), the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), effective immediately, Habersham Home will screen all employees, healthcare providers, vendors, consultants, contractors and others who provide care and services to Habersham Home residents.

In addition to adhering to all of the standard infection and disease prevention methods provided by the CDC and CMS, all HMC healthcare members and service providers to Habersham Home will be screened for symptoms of acute respiratory illness (e.g., fever, cough, difficulty breathing) before entering the facility.

Additionally, in an effort to help further safeguard residents to COVID-19 exposure risk, HMC and Habersham Home will adopt a “No Visitors” Stance, meaning no outside visitors will be permitted to see residents. The No Visitors Stance will be in effect until further notice. The only exceptions to the No Visitor Stance will be in compassionate cases. Communications about the Stance have been provided to family members for all current Habersham Home residents. Questions about the Stance can be directed to Dale Austin, Habersham Home’s Director of Nursing, 706-491-0374.

Given the rapid rates of transmission of the COVID-19, it is critical that we take every precaution possible to lower the risk of exposure to the virus for all Habersham Home residents who are particularly vulnerable to infection. Protecting our residents’ health and safety is our top priority and we will take every possible measure to minimize any potential exposure to the virus.

The below websites provide additional information about COVID-19:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/workplace-school-and-home-guidance.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

<https://dph.georgia.gov/novelcoronavirus>

#### **ABOUT HABERSHAM MEDICAL CENTER**

Habersham Medical Center, a 53-licensed-bed acute care hospital, serves approximately 80,000 residents in Habersham and adjoining counties. HMC operates Habersham Home, an 84-licensed-bed skilled nursing facility, and HCMC Home Care, the service area's sole agency for hospital-based home health providers.