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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A Prescription for Flu Season: Call the Infection Specialist

Somerset, N.J. – As flu season looms, nursing center staff and residents tend to take a deep breath, close their eyes tight and brace themselves for a rough few weeks. But despite the H1N1 pandemic that threatens to complicate this flu season, staff and residents at Willow Creek Rehabilitation and Care Center aren't panicking. Instead, they've called in a specialist.

By hiring a doctor who specializes in infectious disease prevention and management, administrator Steven Furman hopes to replace anxiety about disease with closely managed actions to prevent its spread. Robert E. Segal, M.D., is part of ID Care, the largest infectious disease practice in New Jersey. He will serve as a dedicated consultant to Willow Creek, providing year-round guidance and support to residents, staff and visitors.

Trying to control the spread of infection in a nursing center can be challenging, to say the least. The residents spend a lot of time together, and many have medical conditions that make them vulnerable to illness.

Additionally, new microbes are constantly entering the building by way of family members and visiting doctors, not to mention the staff members themselves. Perhaps worst of all are infections like MRSA and hospital-acquired pneumonia, both of which can be transferred from hospitals to nursing centers right along with the people who have them.

While there is no way to ensure that germs do not enter the building, Segal works to limit their spread. Part of his job is hands-on ó everything from ensuring employees' vaccines are up to date to managing individual cases of antibiotic-resistant infection.

But perhaps more importantly, Segal also develops policy, meeting with nurse managers on a monthly basis õto go over problems, come up with new ideas and write guidelines for addressing current issues as well as anything that may be a



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problem in the future.ö Which is why, even though the center has not had a single case of H1N1 flu, that policy is already on the books.

öWe are excited that Dr. Segal will be personally overseeing our patients' health concerns as well as educating the Willow Creek community on state-of-the-art infection control practices,ö said Furman. öHis specialized role helps us ensure that we are prepared for whatever might come our way.ö

Segal is a Montreal native with medical training at McGill University, Cornell University, Harvard Medical School and Montefiore Medical Center. He is board certified in both internal medicine and infectious diseases.

Willow Creek Rehabilitation and Care Center, a member of Revera Health Systems, offers short-term care and therapy after surgery or illness for adults of all ages, as well as long-term, respite and hospice care. For more information, visit reveraWillowCreek.com.

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