COVID-19

Visitor Restriction Policies

The Indiana Hospital Association is committed to serving our members by providing resources to help our hospitals be the best stewards of safe care. During this unprecedented time of crisis with novel coronavirus (COVID-19), we acknowledge that hospitals are faced with unique challenges to not only provide safe care to the communities they serve, but also to keep their staff safe. As a practical guide, this toolkit was created to be used only as a resource for guidance on best practices and examples of how health care facilities are implementing visitor restrictions. Realizing that each day we are receiving new information and situations change, this toolkit is not all-inclusive. IHA will post any new helpful information as we receive it on the IHA website.

Patient and staff safety and healthy hospitals will always be a priority for IHA. Thank you to the members who have already begun to share their best practices during this difficult time.

Together we are better!

CDC Recommendations for Health Care Visitor Restrictions

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website is one of the top resources for updated recommendations and best practices on the interim infection prevention and control practices during the COVID-19 crisis. The website is where you can find how to limit the virus from entering health care facilities and keep both patients and staff safe. One very important step in this process is to limit the number of visitors to your facility, and to educate the ones who can be with their loved one during this crisis. The complete list of guidelines can be found here.

Long-term Care Facilities

CDC

Per the CDC, nursing homes are at the highest risk of being infected by COVID-19, often because older adults may have underlying chronic medical conditions. It is noted that visitors who may be ill and health care staff are most likely the source of bringing the virus into the facility. Because of this, the CDC recommends that strict visitor policies be enforced for all extended care facilities and a checklist to be used for preparedness. For guidance on visitor restrictions, visit the CDC website here. The CDC also provides a checklist for nursing homes and other long-term care facilities to assist in planning.

CMS

On March 13, CMS issued a memorandum that provided guidance for infection control and prevention in nursing homes. The guidance was coordinated with the CDC and local public health departments and guides the process to ensure that residents of nursing homes stay safe during this health crisis.

Indiana County Health Departments

If you should have specific questions related to visitation polices at hospitals in Indiana, please visit the individual county health department website. Information such as positive case counts, testing processes, and visitation at county hospitals can usually be found on these sites, along with other pertinent information related to community health.

Examples of Hospital Visitation Policies

Indianapolis Patient Safety Coalition
In 2018, the Marion County hospitals in central Indiana, working with the Indianapolis Patient Safety Coalition, joined together to develop a cohesive policy for visitation during a public health emergency. This [policy](#) provides guidelines for patient-specific and general visitor restrictions, along with suggestions for decision support tools and voluntary community-wide restrictions.