

## Community Spiritual Visitor Information and Guidelines

Island Health recognizes the importance of having visitors from the community support the spiritual, religious and cultural needs of patients and residents in Island Health facilities. To that end we offer the following guidelines to help ensure that the visits made by community representatives are as safe as supportive as possible.

### What you need to know:

- Community Spiritual Visitors (CSV) are:
  - individuals designated by their spiritual, religious or cultural community to visit members who are patients or residents in an Island Health facility (*i.e. pastors, priests, rabbis, elders etc....*)
  - individuals, or groups of individuals, from various spiritual, religious or cultural communities who offer tradition-specific activities to residents. (*i.e. church groups, hymn singers, bible readers*)
  - governed by Island Health's [Visitor Policies](#) and **Guidelines for CSVs** (see below)
  - may be entitled to obtain a parking pass for certain Island Health facilities (see below)
  - invited to utilize Sacred Spaces, Prayer Rooms, All Nations Healing Rooms and Gathering Spaces as quiet places where you may gather with the person(s) you are visiting. Please ask staff for the location of the sacred space at the site you are visiting.
  - required to follow all visitor policies and restrictions whenever they are applied.

### What you need to do:

Adhere to Island Health's Visitor Policies:

- Visiting Someone in Hospital  
<https://www.islandhealth.ca/patients-visitors/visiting-someone-in-hospital>
- Visiting Someone in Long-Term Care or Assisted Living  
<https://www.islandhealth.ca/our-services/assisted-living-long-term-care-services/long-term-care-and-assisted-living-social-visiting-information>

Adhere to the following Guidelines for CSVs:

- a. Respect patients' and residents' confidentiality. This includes asking their permission (or the permission of the person designated to make decisions on their behalf) prior to sharing any of their personal/health information with others – including their family members, and those in your spiritual or cultural community.
- b. Be mindful of discussing a patient's personal information in public areas. When discussing such information efforts should be made to ensure patient privacy.
- c. Personal patient information (notes etc..) should be disposed of in a proper manner (i.e. use confidential recycling bins on units and not regular garbage receptacles).
- d. Patients and residents have the right to only receive the care for which they have asked and/or given consent for. CSVs are only to visit/support members of their own spiritual/cultural/religious community.
- e. Proselytizing – i.e. trying to convert, providing information about your community, offering prayer etc. – to those outside your community is not allowed.
- f. Do not give any physical help to patients/residents. This “hands on care” is the responsibility of trained staff. This includes assisting patients/residents in or out of chairs, wheelchairs and beds, and to or from the bathroom. If you would like to push a patient/resident in a wheelchair please first check with staff, and if you have not used a wheelchair before, ask how to do so safely.
- g. If a patient/resident or their family asks you a question about their health or healthcare, please suggest that they bring this question to their nurse or doctor. Do not offer health or healthcare advice, unless this is part of your role as a spiritual/religious/cultural care provider. If the patient/resident would like you to be present with them while they talk with staff, you could offer to help them remember questions and answers by writing these down.
- h. If you would like to give a patient/resident anything to eat or drink, including water, first check with their nurse. There may be medical reasons why certain food and drink are not to be given at that time.
- i. Do not handle medications or any medical or diagnostic equipment.
- j. If the patient/resident would like to leave their room or the floor with you (e.g. to go for a walk), please let staff know when you are leaving and when you will return, so they can plan the timing of care, such as giving medications.
- k. When visiting in a shared room / space, please be mindful of your voice level, for privacy and for minimizing the overall volume of sound.
- l. If your spiritual/religious or cultural care requires louder sound – e.g. singing, drumming, group prayer etc. – please ask staff if there is a private space you can go to, such as a family room, or Sacred Space, Gathering Place or All Nations Healing Room.

Community Spiritual Visitors facilitating group religious, spiritual or cultural practices in Island Health facilities must:

- a. Be registered at the site(s) where such services will be offered
- b. Share Island Health Visitor Policy and CSV Guidelines with all those involved in the services
- c. Adhere to the set calendar times to provide such services notifying LTC staff of any absences
- d. Provide services only to residents who identify with their tradition
- e. Follow direction of LTC staff
- f. Notify LTC staff of residents from their tradition who may be interested in participating in group services.
- g. Not engage in any activities that put the health and safety of residents, staff, volunteers or visitors at risk.

Observe all Island Health hygiene practices including:

- a. Not visiting if you are experiencing flu-like symptoms. (e.g. sore throat, sneezing, coughing).
- b. Wearing a mask during flu season if you have not had a flu shot. Flu season is generally between December and April; please watch for signs posted at Island Health sites.
- c. If a large number of patients on one floor have the flu (“flu outbreak”), visiting may not be allowed, or be very limited, until the outbreak is over. Please watch for these signs. You may want to call ahead prior to your visit to see if the unit is under quarantine.
- d. Following proper hygiene practices (before, between and after visits) will ensure a safe visit for both you and those you visit.
- e. Please follow all notices (posted outside patient room doors) regarding when and how to put on and remove personal protective equipment (gowns/masks/gloves). If you have any questions about using protective equipment, hospital staff can assist you.

## **HAND HYGIENE**

- a. Keeping hands clean is the best defense in preventing the spread of infection and disease. Hands may look clean but invisible microorganisms (germs) are always present - some harmful, some not.

When to clean your hands:

- On entering and leaving the hospital and hospital unit
- After visiting the toilet
- Before eating or handling food
- When hands are visibly soiled
- After coughing or sneezing into the hands

Alcohol Based Hand Rub dispensers at most Island Health sites are orange. Alcohol Based Hand Rub containing between 70%-90% alcohol is the preferred product of choice to routinely decontaminate hands which are not visibly soiled as it: rapidly and effectively kills most transient microorganisms; is easily accessible and less time-consuming than washing with soap and water; and, is gentler on skin and less drying than soap and water.

### **Technique for Alcohol Based Hand Rub:**

All hand surfaces must be covered and rubbed vigorously for effective hand hygiene. Apply enough product to palm of hand to cover all surfaces/areas of hands and wrists. Apply sufficient product such that it will remain in contact with the hands for a minimum of 15 seconds before the product absorbs.

### **Technique for Soap and Water:**

Soap dispensers at most Island Health sites are blue. To start, wet hands with water, apply one pump of soap to palms; rub hands together vigorously, covering all surfaces/areas of hands, fingers and wrists until any soiled areas are removed; a minimum of 15 seconds of lathering is required before rinsing. Rinse hands with water and pat dry with a disposable towel; turn off taps with paper towel, to avoid recontamination of the hands.

Observe all displays regarding additional personal protective equipment (gowns, gloves, masks, visors) that may be required to make your visit.

- If permitted to obtain a parking pass at certain Island Health sites please fill in the following form and return it to the nearest Spiritual Health Practitioner:

<https://www.islandhealth.ca/sites/default/files/2019-11/parking-form-spiritual-and-pastoral-care-registration.pdf>

- Questions from any CSVs can be directed to [spiritualhealth@islandhealth.ca](mailto:spiritualhealth@islandhealth.ca)