



GUIDANCE FOR HOSPITAL VISITOR RESTRICTIONS for COVID-19

Voluntary Standard Restrictions*

For District of Columbia hospitals and health systems, there is no greater priority than the health and safety of patients. COVID-19 is a novel virus that poses an unprecedented threat to our patients, especially those who are elderly, have underlying medical conditions or have compromised immune systems. DC hospitals and health systems have partnered with the District of Columbia Hospital Association to initiate heightened precautions by adopting standardized visitor restrictions across our city. These precautions include:

- Screening of all visitors and vendors to include:
 - Cold or flu-like symptoms including fever, coughing, sneezing, runny nose and trouble breathing.
 - Recent travel history to nations with high coronavirus activity as listed in the CDC's travel alerts.
 - Any contact with individuals confirmed or determined to be a "person under investigation" for coronavirus.
 - If any of these conditions are present, the individual will not be allowed to visit.
- Minimizing visitors to two at a time.
- Prohibiting visitors under age 12.

Signage should be posted to promote awareness of these precautions (attached). These voluntary standards will remain in place until further notice as the District of Columbia health care community takes aggressive steps to protect our patients and our staff members from coronavirus.

Facility Access Restrictions

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services urges hospitals with emergency departments to screen all patients presenting in the ED for COVID-19. While each hospital and health systems' ability to limit facility access and screen patients, visitors, and vendors differs, hospitals and health systems across DC may consider taking the steps below to the extent practical.

- Identify limited/minimal entrance and exit sites for staff, ED patients and visitors, EMS patients, and all other patients, visitors, and vendors, and temporarily close non-essential entrance and exits points.
- Place signs at closed entrance points informing patients and visitors that the entrance is closed and where they should go to enter the facility.
- Place signage on open entrance points informing patients and visitors about your facility's screening protocols (e.g. assessing travel history to a region with COVID-19, exposure risk and/or having signs and symptoms of respiratory illness).
- Store and secure masks away from access points inside external doors and within eyesight of security or triage personnel. Distribute masks based on your facility's protocol to ensure conservation and appropriate use of PPE.
- Require all vendors to enter through a designated entry point.

More information about COVID-19:

- DC Health, <https://coronavirus.dc.gov/>
- District of Columbia Hospital Association, <https://www.dcha.org/quality-safety/coronavirus>
- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
- For general inquiries, call 202-576-1117

**Individual hospitals may make modifications to the recommendations above based on situational changes and the needs and precautions necessary to protect patients, staff and visitors.*