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UTAH HOSPITALS ADOPT VISITATION POLICY RECOMMENDATION

UHA, Utah Hospitals & Health Systems Association, has adopted a visitation policy recommendation for Utah hospitals during the H1N1 influenza season.

“Because of our strong commitment to patient safety and a high level of concern for the health of patients, UHA recommends restricted visitor access to all Utah hospitals starting sometime between now and October 15,” commented Joseph M. Krella, UHA President and CEO. Data suggests that the action will reduce the risk of spreading H1N1 and seasonal flu to those at high risk of serious complications.

The recommended guidelines are as follow:

- Visitation by children to hospitals shall be restricted. UHA recommends no visitors younger than 14 years of age shall be allowed in hospitals; however, individual facilities or systems may decide to enforce restrictions

at a younger or older age. Specific age restrictions for children will be determined by each facility.

- No more than two visitors at a time. This applies to both visitors in inpatient rooms and those accompanying patients to the emergency department.
- No sick visitors. Visitors with fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea are asked to stay home.
- Visitation restrictions for patients in end-of-life situations will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- Patients should ask for a mask and wear it if exhibiting flu or cold symptoms.
- Visitors should wash hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.
- Visitors should cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or an upper sleeve.

Due to increased H1N1 activity, several hospitals and health systems have already implemented the guidelines in their facilities.

The guidelines were developed and supported by two UHA task forces—the Utah Disaster Advisory Committee and the UHA Triage Guidelines Task Force. Both groups are tasked to prepare hospitals to respond in a coordinated manner to any pandemic or natural disaster scenario.

UHA is a private, not-for-profit trade association representing Utah's hospitals and health systems.

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