

COMMUNITY SPIRITUAL VISITORS GUIDELINES & INFORMATION

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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for supporting the spiritual wellbeing of your community members while they are receiving care at Island Health sites. The Spiritual Health program warmly welcomes you. The following information is to help you feel more comfortable with Island Health guidelines and practices for safety, and for how Island Health staff and community based care providers can work together.

The title, "Community Spiritual Visitors", refers to anyone who is designated by their spiritual, religious or cultural community to visit members who are patients or residents in an Island Health facility.

While Island Health staff do not recommend any particular Community Spiritual Visitor to patients or residents we do recognize that the spiritual and/or cultural care you provide to your community members can be very important for their healing, wellness and peace. We would like to support you, and work together, in providing this care.

In this booklet you will find information on:

1. Guidelines for Visiting
2. Hygiene Practices
3. Sacred Spaces
4. Parking Passes
5. Spiritual Health Contact Information

If you have any questions please contact Island Health's Spiritual Health Leader at spiritualhealth@viha.ca

1. GUIDELINES FOR VISITING

- a. As with Island Health staff, Community Spiritual Visitors (CSVs) need to 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. CSVs are to 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. Any notes having personal patient information should be disposed of in a proper manner (i.e. use confidential recycling bins on units and not regular garbage receptacles).
- d. In keeping with patients and residents' right to have only the care for which they have asked and/or given informed consent, only visit members of your own spiritual/cultural/religious community. Proselytizing – i.e. trying to convert, providing information about your community, offering prayer etc. – to those outside your community is not allowed.
- e. For the safety of yourself and others, do not give any physical help to patients/residents. At Island Health sites, 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.
- f. 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/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.
- g. 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.
- h. Do not handle medications or any medical or diagnostic equipment.
- i. 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.
- j. When visiting in a shared room / space, please be mindful of your voice level, for privacy and for minimizing the overall volume of sound. If your spiritual 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.
- k. Remember to follow hygiene guidelines (see reverse).

2. HYGIENE PRACTICES

Do not visit if you are experiencing flu-like symptoms. (e.g. sore throat, sneezing, coughing).

You are required to wear 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.

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.

Following proper hygiene practices (before, between and after visits) will ensure a safe visit for both you and those you visit.

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

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.

3. SACRED SPACES

Sacred Spaces, Prayer Rooms, All Nations Healing Rooms and Gathering Spaces are quiet places where you may gather with the person(s) you are visiting and are available at most Island Health sites. Please ask staff for the location of the sacred space at the site you are visiting.

4. PARKING PASSES

CSVs may be entitled to receive a parking pass at certain Island Health sites. Please contact the site Spiritual Health Practitioner for more information.

5. SPIRITUAL HEALTH CONTACTS

Comox Valley Hospital
250-331-5900 (65306)

Nanaimo Regional General Hospital
250-755-7691 (54022)

Cowichan District Hospital
250-737-2030 (44289)

Victoria General Hospital
250-727-4278 (14278)

Royal Jubilee Hospital
250-370-8207 (18207)

Saanich Peninsula Hospital
250-544-7676 (23322)