



Department of Health

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DATE: March 18, 2020

TO: Hospitals

**Health Advisory: COVID-19 Guidance for Hospital Operators
Regarding Visitation**

Please distribute immediately to:

Administrators, Infection Preventionists, Medical Directors, Physicians,
Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, Nursing Staff, Risk Managers,
Public Affairs, and to all units of the hospital

COVID-19 has been detected in multiple communities around New York State. Visitors may introduce COVID-19 infection into the hospital. The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) is issuing the following guidance regarding visitors to hospitals and other precautions and procedures hospitals must take to protect and maintain the health and safety of their patients and staff during the ongoing novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

To prevent the introduction of COVID-19 into hospitals:

Effective immediately, suspend all visitation except when medically necessary (i.e. visitor is essential to the care of the patient) or for family members or legal representatives of patients in imminent end-of-life situations. In addition:

- Any visitors meeting these exceptions must be screened for symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, or fever) or potential exposure to someone with COVID-19 and the duration and number of visits should be minimized.
- Hospitals should attempt to provide other forms of communication to meet the needs of their patients.
- Hospitals must post signage notifying the public of the suspension of visitation in all hospital entrances and in parking lots. In addition, these policies should be posted to the hospital's website and social media pages.

Thank you for your efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19.