
ADDENDUM

HACKETTSTOWN REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

Division of Nursing

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Issue Date: April 1, 2004
Revised Date: 2/05, 8/08, 7/11

TITLE: VISITING AND FAMILY COMMUNICATION in the CRITICAL CARE UNITS

Policy: It is the policy of Hackettstown Regional Medical Center to provide guidelines for visiting patients located in the Critical Care units. We recognize that family members have a significant role in the patient's ability to cope during his/her stay in the hospital, thus the Critical Care units maintain flexible visiting hours.

A. Supportive Data:

1. When a patient is admitted to an ICCU/CCU or PCU both the patient and family members are experiencing a major life crisis.
2. Families can serve as a buffer against patient stress and act as a patient care resource.
3. Families can also have a high level of stress and may be unable to support the patient and may transfer their stress to the patient.
4. A communication plan will be developed between the family and the nursing staff to relay information. This information includes but is not limited to:
 - a) Assisting family in communication with attending and consulting physicians.
 - b) Notifying family as soon as possible of any changes in patient's condition for the worse. Discussion will occur between the RN and physician prior to family notification. If the physician does not notify the family, then the RN may. Notify family if transfer out of ICCU/CCU or PCU becomes necessary due to triage.
 - c) If the patient is transported to another facility outside HRMC, inform family of transport routine, directions to the other hospital and other pertinent data such as what staff or equipment will accompany the patient. NOTE: if patient is to be transferred to a Mental Health Facility written permission from the patient must be obtained in order to notify family of transfer.

B. Procedure:

1. Upon admission to the unit, the admitting nurse or primary care nurse of the patient will assess family needs and gather a family database.
2. During admission process the primary nurse will discuss visitation routine, hours, special circumstances and give family member a copy of the "Visiting Guidelines" specific to ICU/CCU or PCU.
3. During admission process the following information will be gathered and communicated.
 - a) Introduce yourself and the other members of the nursing staff
 - b) Direct family to Waiting Room and give them a time frame that you will return to get them, after you admit the patient
 - c) Direct the family to cafeteria/nourishment center and inform them of operating hours.
 - d) Direct family members to public phones and/or inform them of cell phone policy.
 - e) Determine who are the significant family members and how are they related to the patient.
 - f) Confirm emergency contact information and discuss with patient and family which family member will be the spokesperson for the family. This person, when visiting the patient will receive daily updates on the patient's condition and inform other family members. Explain that this will reduce the number of phone calls coming into the nursing unit, so the nurses can spend more time with patients.
4. Reinforce Critical Care specific rules
 - a) Due to the equipment in the room, noise level and respect to patients, the number of visitors at the bedside at any one time may need to be limited. This is for ICU and PCU.
 - b) If needs or condition change with any patient in the unit you may ask families to leave the unit and go to the waiting room.

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- c) Children may be permitted for brief visits as the patient's condition allows and with nursing staff consent. Patients on isolation or if numerous patients in either unit are on isolation the visitation of young children should not be encouraged.
- d) Family may be asked to leave the nursing units between 7:00am-8:00am and 7:00pm-8:00pm, while nurses are changing shifts and giving report. This will respect the confidentiality of all our patients.
- e) Telephone communication regarding patient information and test results may be shared when the nursing staff initiates the call to the family spokesperson as requested by the patient or next of kin.
- f) The use of hospital phones at the nurses' station is not permitted unless there are special circumstances.
- g) No plants or flowers are allowed in the ICU
- h) Family should be asked to wash their hands/use foam sanitizer before entering patient's room.
- i) Cell phone usage- To respect the privacy of other patients and a healing environment, the use of cell phones in the patient rooms of ICU and PCU are not encouraged. The family waiting area is available, as well as all other public areas of the hospital for cell phone calls.

C. Family Communication- special discussions:

1. If Patient's condition or wishes warrant discussion of DNR, approach family after discussion with primary physician. Follow DNR procedure.
2. If patient's condition warrants discussion of organ donation, follow procedure for Organ Donation and Procurement. Do not approach the family to discuss this matter. The Sharing Network representative will be the first person to discuss this matter with family.