



Roles for Patient & Family Advisors in Changing the Concept From Families as “Visitors” to Families as Partners

As with so many other quality improvement initiatives, hospitals that are embarking on the process of changing their “visiting” policies and practices will benefit greatly from the input of patients, families, and other care partners. Ideally, they should be involved from the beginning so their valuable perspective can inform every step of the process from assessment and data-gathering to re-writing of policies and other materials to education of staff. Hospitals that have existing Patient and Family Advisory Councils have a “ready resource” from which to enlist participation. Other hospitals may have to recruit through staff referrals and other channels.

Possible roles for patients, families, and other care partners:

- Serve as members of and/or co-chair the task force or committee which is formed to guide the change in policy and practice
- Review hospital materials, especially, patient/family handbooks, informational packets and brochures, website, social media venues
- Tour the hospital through the “eyes” of patients, families, and care partners and examine signage and aspects of the physical environment (e.g., space at the bedside)
- Talk to other patients, families, and care partners in focus groups or other gatherings to gain their perspective on the hospital’s current “visiting” policies and practices
- Review results of patient/family satisfaction surveys and other data, looking for themes relevant to perceptions about “visiting”
- Share personal stories with leadership and with staff in educational sessions
- Present at or co-facilitate educational sessions for staff about the importance of family presence and participation
- Use the Better Together *Guide for Families* in various peer support activities

For more detailed information on the role of patient and family advisors, see these other IPFCC resources:

Essential Allies - Patient, Resident and Family Advisors: A Guide for Staff Liaisons
Words of Advice: A Guide for Patient, Resident, and Family Advisors



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