

**National Surveillance Related to Visitor Restrictions  
COVID-19  
March 17, 2020**

For South Carolina's hospitals and health systems, the greatest priority is the health and safety of our patients and team members. COVID-19 is a disease that poses an unprecedented threat to our patients, especially those who are elderly, have underlying medical conditions, or compromised immune systems. The South Carolina Hospital Association is surveilling policies and procedures related to visitor restrictions from several states and hospitals. It is important to note that a hospital's supply of personal protective equipment greatly influence visitor restrictions. Although the situation is changing rapidly, the general minimum precautions include:

- Screening of all visitors, contractors, and vendors to include:
  - Any cold or flu-like symptoms including fever, coughing, sneezing, runny nose, and trouble breathing for the last 48-hours (*In South Carolina, those with mild or moderate symptoms should be directed to a virtual visit as provided for free by several South Carolina health systems*)
  - Travel history within the last 14 days to areas with coronavirus activity
  - Any contact with individuals confirmed or determined to be a person under investigation for coronavirus
  - If any of these conditions are present, the individual will not be allowed to visit
- Restricting visitor entrances to those where screening occurs
- Minimizing the number of symptom-free visitors to one per patient
- Discouraging visitors under age 18 (or age 12 in many instances)
- Donning visitors of a person under investigation for or confirmed COVID-19 in personal protective equipment, consistent with clinical personnel
- Limiting contractors and vendors to necessary services
- Customizing visitor policies for different areas of the facility (for example, the emergency department may have a different policy than inpatient)