



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

As with so many other quality improvement and safety 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 perspectives can inform every step of the process from assessment and data-gathering to rewriting of policies and other materials to educate staff, clinicians, and other patients and families. 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.

### **Potential roles for patients, families, and other care partners:**

- Serve as members of and/or co-chair the task force or committee that is formed to guide the change in policy and practice or other committees related to this change in policy.
- Review and assist in revising hospital materials, especially, current visiting policy, patient/family handbooks, informational packets and brochures, website, and social media venues.
- Tour the hospital through the “eyes” of patients, families, and care partners and examine signage and aspects of the physical environment that support or hinder family presence (e.g., signage, bulletin boards, space and comfortable furnishings at the bedside, arrangement of chairs in exam rooms).
- Talk with other patients, families, and care partners in focus groups or other gatherings to gain their perspectives 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,” family presence, and family participation.
- Share personal stories with leadership and frontline staff and clinicians in educational sessions and other meetings.
- Present at or co-facilitate educational sessions for staff and clinicians about the importance of family presence and participation.
- Use the **Better Together Guide for Families** in various peer support activities to build on the confidence and competence of families to be present and active participants in care, care planning, and decision-making.
- Serve as members of the team responsible for evaluating and tracking progress in this change in policy and practice.

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

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

For more information, tools, and resources about the *Better Together: Partnering with Families* campaign, visit:  
<http://www.ipfcc.org/advance/topics/better-together.html>