

# Plants and Flowers in PHC Acute Care Areas

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Purpose

Plants, their soil, and water containing cut flowers may harbor microorganisms, such as *Acinetobacter*, *Klebsiella*, *Enterobacter*, *Pseudomonas*, and other gram negative bacteria as well as fungi like *Aspergillus*. These microorganisms from potted plants or [flowers](#) are capable of causing, and in some cases have been linked with, hospital acquired infections, particularly among immunocompromised patients. This policy is to ensure that potted plants and flowers do not cause inadvertent harm to patients.

### 1.2. Scope

This policy applies to all PHC Acute Care Areas and [staff](#).

### 1.3. Exceptions

This policy does not apply to community or long-term care sites.

This policy does not apply to plants and flowers used for religious or cultural ceremonies. These ceremonies will need to be done in an approved space (e.g., the All Nations Sacred Space) and not in an area where direct patient care is performed.

Palliative care units are the only direct care space that potted plants and flowers are permitted.

## 2. Policy

Potted plants and flowers are not to be brought into any acute care unit or [direct care spaces](#), other than palliative care (see Section 2.1 below).

Any decorative plant or flower fixture, whether permanent or temporary, in non-direct care spaces (e.g., entrance lobby, indoor atriums, etc.) should be approved by IPAC and Facilities prior to installation.

Staff will educate and reinforce to family members and visitors to not bring their loved ones potted plants or flowers.

Staff will not bring potted plants and flowers in to any acute care unit or direct care space.

### 2.1. Potted Plants and Flowers in Palliative Care Units

In permitted spaces, it is suggested that plants and flowers only be handled by support staff who have little or no patient contact. If nursing/direct care staff handle plants/flowers they must ensure they perform hand hygiene immediately after contact.

Vases filled with water must not be in any patient room.

Water in vases should be replaced every two days, and old water should be discarded in a utility sink and not a patient or hand hygiene sink. Clean and disinfect vases after use.

### 3. Responsibilities

#### 3.1 All PHC staff

All staff must be aware that potted plants and flowers are not to be permitted in patient care spaces, except as outlined in Section 1.3.

#### 3.2 Educators and Leadership

Ensure staff are educated on this policy.

#### 3.3 Screeners and door greeters

Advise visitors that flowers and plants are not permitted upon arrival to the hospital.

### 4. Compliance

All staff are expected to be compliant with this policy.

### 5. Supporting Documents

#### 5.1 Related Policies

- [Cultural and Ceremonial Use of Tobacco and Smudging Medicines](#)
- [Febrile Neutropenia](#)

### 6. Definitions

**“Direct care spaces”** include all patient rooms (including private), workstations/spaces, clinics, and offices on any hospital unit.

**“Flowers”** include any living/potted flowers or fresh/cut flowers placed in vases with water.

**“Staff”** means all employees (including management and leadership), Medical Staff Members (including physicians, midwives, dentists and Nurse Practitioners), residents, fellows and trainees, health care professionals, students, volunteers, contractors and other service providers.

### 7. References

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