



AH0900 – Visitation and Essential Care Providers

Interior Health would like to acknowledge that it operates and provides services on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Dākelh Dené, Ktunaxa, Nlaka’pamux, Secwépemc, St’át’imc, syilx, and Tšilhqot’in Nations.

Interior Health recognizes that a diverse workplace includes all people, particularly those belonging to historically, systemically, and/or persistently marginalized groups, as well as individuals with protected characteristics under the B.C. Human Rights Code.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

Interior Health (IH) recognizes the vital role [Essential Care Providers](#) and [Visitors](#) provide to individual wellbeing and supporting the principles of [Person- and Family-Centred Care](#). This policy supports their presence in all [IH Facilities](#), while upholding the highest standards of care and safety for the [Clients](#), [Employees](#) and [Medical Staff](#).

1.2 Applicability

This policy applies to [Employees](#), [Medical Staff](#), [Essential Care Providers](#) and [Visitors](#) attending [IH Facilities](#).

1.3 Scope

This policy identifies and supports IH [Employees](#), [Medical Staff](#), [Essential Care Providers](#) and [Visitors](#) in attending to [Clients](#) who are receiving care at [IH Facilities](#).

This policy **does not** include directions related to:

- Contracted regulated private service providers. See Policy [AK0200 - Private Service Providers](#).
- Medical directives. See Policy [AH4000 – Medical Orders for Scope of Treatment \(MOST\) and Advance Care Planning \(ACP\)](#)
- Adult consent processes. See Policy [AL0100 – Consent – Adults](#)
- Minor consent processes. See Policy [AL0200 – Consent – Persons Under 19 Years of Age](#)

2.0 POLICY

2.1 [Essential Care Providers](#) and [Visitors](#) are welcome at all [IH Facilities](#) 24/7, or within applicable hours for facilities that do not have overnight services. [Employees](#) and [Medical Staff](#) work with [Essential Care Providers](#) and [Visitors](#) to support necessary access and limitations to balance the health and safety of all.

2.2 [Essential Care Providers](#), important to the [Client's](#) wellbeing and safety, may be present throughout the [Client's](#) stay in [IH Facilities](#).

Limitations:

2.3 [Employees](#) and [Medical Staff](#) will make every effort to respect the [Client's](#) visitation wishes. If limitations are needed. [Employees](#) and [Medical Staff](#) will

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discuss with the [Client](#), [Essential Care Providers](#), and [Visitors](#), and develop a collaborative plan to address any concerns and find a reasonable solution.

2.4 [Clients](#), [Essential Care Providers](#) and [Visitors](#) will be directed to the IH [Patient Care Quality Office](#) with any concerns that cannot be resolved at the local level

2.5 [Employees](#) and [Medical Staff](#) will promote [Essential Care Provider](#) and [Visitor](#) presence, including cultural practices and traditional ceremonies (e.g., smudging ceremonies at beginning and end of life).

2.6 [Employees](#) and [Medical Staff](#) may limit the number of [Visitors](#) in the following situations:

- Shared rooms,
- Homes with multiple occupancy (e.g., Long-Term Care, Assisted Living, group homes),
- Infectious disease outbreaks, or
- Other safety requirements

Offer an alternative visiting area, if possible or required.

2.7 [Employees](#) and [Medical Staff](#) will communicate restrictions, and direct [Essential Care Providers](#) and [Visitors](#) on required safety measures (e.g., temporarily vacating the area, washing hands, and/or wearing personal protective equipment such as a mask, gown, or gloves).

2.8 IH reserves the right to ask any individual whose behaviour is disruptive, aggressive or infringes upon any other person’s rights or safety, to leave the [IH Facility](#) and site. Refer to Policy [AV2900](#).

2.9 Infectious Disease Management:

- The Provincial Health Officer issues guidelines during periods of elevated risk (e.g., annual influenza season).
- [Essential Care Providers](#) and [Visitors](#) comply with Policy [AV1350](#) by entering IH facilities after:
 - receiving the seasonal influenza vaccine; **OR**
 - putting on a surgical or procedure mask, provided by the site, and washing their hands (see 2.6 above).
- [Essential Care Providers](#) and [Visitors](#) who are unwell, actively ill, or exhibiting symptoms of a communicable disease must not enter [IH Facilities](#).
- Washrooms designated for [Clients](#) are for their use only, due to potential risk of exposure to infection or illness. Public washrooms are available at all sites.

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- 2.10 [Clients](#) wishing to have their pet(s)/service animal visit in an [IH Facility](#), must confirm with the care area, prior to them coming on site. Pet(s) can be restricted in care areas, for health and safety reasons, in accordance with the [IH Infection Prevention and Control Pet Therapy and Visitation](#).
- 2.11 [Essential Care Providers](#) and [Visitors](#) comply with Policy [AR1000](#) by getting permission before taking photos, videos, or audio recordings of anyone on the unit, including [Clients](#), [Visitors](#), [Employees](#), or [Medical Staff](#).
- 2.12 [Essential Care Providers](#) and [Visitors](#) are to support a scent reduced environment by refraining from wearing, using or bringing in scented products, including strongly scented flowers, to [IH Facilities](#). Exceptions may be considered during Indigenous ceremonies and use of traditional medicines in compliance with Policy [AD0200](#).
- 2.13 Children requiring supervision must be accompanied by a responsible adult other than the [Client](#).
- 2.14 Cell phones and other personal electronic devices are set to silent, or vibrate mode, to limit disruptions to others or interruptions to care delivery.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

[Employees](#) and [Medical Staff](#) support [Essential Care Providers'](#) and [Visitors'](#) participation in care by having this Policy available and, where possible, provide it in both written and as verbal information.

4.0 COMPLIANCE

Failure to comply with any provision of this Policy may result in removal from the IH facility and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, services, or privileges.

5.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This policy is reviewed every 5 years or as needed by the policy steward.

6.0 INQUIRIES

If you have questions regarding the policy content, please email the Person and Family Centred Care team at ihpersonandfamilycentredcare@interiorhealth.ca.

All other inquiries can be directed to the policy office (IHPolicy@interiorhealth.ca).

7.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS

- [AD0200](#) - *Indigenous Cultural Safety and Humility*
- [AR1000](#) – *Photography, Videotaping and Audio-Recording*
- [AV1350](#) – *Influenza Prevention*
- [AV2900](#) – *Managing Disrespectful, Aggressive or Violent Behaviours of Visitors*
- [Patient Care Quality Office](#)

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9.0 DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
Client	A person who is receiving, has received, or has requested health care. Term is inclusive of client, patient, and resident.
Employee	A person currently employed or contracted by Interior Health in a full-time, part-time, and/or term-specific position. Inclusive of all volunteers, students, contractors and other people, working or acting on behalf of IH.
Essential Care Provider	An individual who is identified by the client for the purpose of providing physical, psychological, and emotional support while they are receiving health care services. This includes but is not limited to family members or friends. For the purposes of this policy, this term excludes Private Service Providers.
IH Facility	Any Interior Health owned, operated or contracted facilities where treatment/procedures and other health services are delivered by or in partnership with IH.
Medical Staff	The physicians, dentists, midwives, and nurse practitioners who have been granted privileges by the Board of Directors to practice in the facilities and programs owned and operated by Interior Health.
Visitor	Any individual within an IH facility, who is not classified as Clients, Essential Care Providers, Medical Staff or Employees.

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