

Medical Advocacy Safety Protocol

COVID-19

This protocol is intended for employees and volunteers and will be used to address providing in-person hospital advocacy during the pandemic. This protocol will remain fluid and may change based on updated CDC and IL Department of Health guidelines. If the protocol requires changes, staff and volunteers will be notified.

Prior to Going the Hospital:

- Hospitals may notify you if a patient screened positive for COVID, but will do so in a way that does not violate HIPAA. If this is the case, offer phone advocacy. Language they may use:
 - Passed or did not pass COVID screening
 - Requesting phone advocacy
- Be prepared to answer COVID screening questions when you get to the hospital (ex: temp, exposure, vaccination status (keep vaccination card on hand), etc.)

Preparing to go into the Hospital:

- Limit the amount of trips you need to take in and out of the hospital by following the below guidelines:
 - **What to Take Inside the Hospital:**
 - Hand Sanitizer
 - Intake Paperwork, Consent for Advocacy (back of packet) & Pen
 - Hospital Packet
 - Clothing as Needed
 - Ask nurse and/or victim prior to entering the hospital if they will be needing clothing and what size
 - If you do not have the size available speak to nurse about options
 - Some hospitals have clothing on site
 - If storing clothing in your personal vehicles, should be stored in a container or space that limits cross contamination
 - **What to Leave in the Car:**
 - Anything you have to take off or set down (ex: purse, coat, sunglasses, etc.)
 - Phone (If you choose to leave phone in car, text your BU so they can be prepared to cover hotline calls)
 - If you take your phone inside, it is still recommended to text your BU that you are at the hospital to limit touching your phone during your hospital call
 - Stuffed Animals/Toys/Snacks/Blankets/etc. - we will not be distributing these at this time
- Put on your mask
 - Ensure hands are clean/sanitized when handling mask
 - Put mask on prior to entering the hospital and ensure there is a tight seal around your nose and mouth
 - Once you have ensured tight seal, sanitize your hands again
 - Do not touch the mask once it is on, this could cause cross contamination
 - If you do touch the mask sanitize your hands immediately

- *Some hospitals will require you to replace your current mask with one they provide; please follow hospital guidelines and procedures*
- Wear mask throughout hospital call and only remove once back at your car
 - It is not recommended to touch the outside of the mask once it has been used
 - If you do touch the mask sanitize your hands immediately
- You can also choose to wear a cloth mask over a surgical or N95 mask; this may extend the life of your N95 mask and limit cross contamination; hospital permitting
- *Some hospitals may choose to give you additional PPE or require you to switch out your current mask with a new one provided by the hospital*
- For more information on masks, see “How Tos” at end of packet
- Put on gloves - (Gloves are optional and can be worn during hospital call)
 - If choosing to wear gloves:
 - Minimize the amount of surfaces you touch to avoid cross contamination
 - Do not use hand sanitizer on gloves, this will cause them to break down and be less effective
 - Gloves should be put on prior to entering the hospital and should be taken off when exiting the hospital in appropriate disposal location
 - For more information on gloves, see “How Tos” on following page
- Enter the hospital only after you have followed the above steps

Once inside the Hospital:

- Touch as few surfaces as possible and maintain approx 6ft distance when able to
- Check in with the nurse prior to entering the victim’s room
 - Discuss safety measures being taken (Do you have any additional PPE for Advocates? Is the victim and/or folks in the room wearing a mask? Is there space to accommodate distancing?)
 - If safety measures have not been put in place AND/OR you feel unsafe:
 - First, discuss with nurse if there are any additional measures that can be taken
 - If measures cannot be or are not taken, leave packet with nurse and tell nurse you will provide phone advocacy
 - Ask nurse best practices for having multiple people in the room and any preferences they have for where you should seat yourself
 - If support person is present, ask that they step out of the room so you can talk one on one with the victim to provide adequate space for distancing
- Be mindful of the space and surroundings
 - Limit your interactions to the nurse/charge nurse providing services and the victim and/or their support person in the room
 - If victim agrees, ask that their support person wait outside of the room
 - *Some hospitals may require you to stay in the room the entire visit rather than assisting with things like grabbing water, blankets, etc.*
 - *Follow hospital protocols; they are put in place to keep you, the patient and medical professionals safe.*
- Follow standard hospital advocacy protocol

Leaving the Hospital:

- Discard gloves in appropriate disposal location (preferably on way out of the hospital (ex: outdoor trash can, trash can prior to exit if you don't have to touch exit doors))
 - Once gloves are taken off do not touch any surfaces until you have used hand sanitizer
- Remove mask once back at your car
 - Prior to removing, either sanitize your hands or remove gloves worn in the hospital
 - If wearing N95, place mask in brown paper bag and seal to prevent cross contamination and to preserve mask for next use
 - Do not use plastic or ziploc bag to store mask, this can cause bacteria to form
 - N95 masks can be used for multiple hospital calls if there have been precautions taken
 - [CDC: Recommended Guidance for Extended N95 Use](#)
 - It is not recommended to touch the outside of the mask once it has been used
 - If you do touch the mask sanitize your hands immediately
 - If wearing cloth mask it is recommended to wash after every use

Employee Expectations

General: Comply with current CDC expectations in regards to travel, quarantining, or quarantining if exposed

- Staff need to reach out to volunteers prior to starting your shift; this way they know who to reach out to if they need assistance
 - Not all volunteers will be providing in-person services; this will be indicated on the hotline schedule; If the volunteer chooses to not provide in-person services it is the responsibility of the staff back up to go to the hospital if called
- Staff should be mindful not to travel to places that require quarantining or a negative COVID test compliant with CDC expectations
 - Quarantining due to travel is not excusable if it conflicts with your assigned shifts
- If you are sick, need to quarantine due to exposure, or cannot fulfill your shift you must find coverage for your shifts and/or work with your supervisor to find coverage
 - It is not the responsibility of the Advocacy team to provide coverage
- Vaccinations are optional and not mandatory, however all staff who work the hotline must respond to in-person calls regardless of their choice to receive the vaccination. Safety precautions are listed on this document

Volunteer Expectations

- Volunteers are expected to keep the Volunteer Coordinator updated on whether they intend to go in-person or not; it is best practice to let the Volunteer Coordinator know prior to scheduling their shifts for the month
- Volunteers who decide to not go in-person will be expected to call their back-up if they receive a call needing in-person services

Post Hospital Call - Employees should follow NWCASA protocols AND take additional precautions:

Hospital Advocacy may or may not put folks at a higher risk of exposure due to the nature of going into hospitals. Our hospital partners will be doing their best to provide a safe environment for advocates. All hospital partners have successfully remained open during COVID and have put in place safety and cleaning protocols to keep their staff safe. The following guidelines are recommendations to help mitigate risks of exposure to other staff post hospital calls.

Current as of 5/18/2021

Follow CDC guidelines in accordance with vaccination status. Questions or concerns follow-up with supervisor.

[CDC - If You Are Fully Vaccinated](#)

[UPDATED CDC Quarantine Guidelines](#)

Additional resources available on following page.

IF AN EXPOSURE HAS OCCURRED: FOLLOW NWCASA POLICIES & GUIDELINES

Acknowledgement of Protocol

I, _____, have read the Medical Advocacy Safety Protocol and I understand the process for returning to in person services at our hospital partners. I understand that it is my responsibility to follow this protocol as well as adhere to hospital safety guidelines when I am present for in-person medical advocacy.

If I have any concerns about a particular hospital or feel like my safety at that hospital was not prioritized, I will notify the Advocacy team who will address these concerns with that hospital. If I have been exposed to COVID whether through hospital advocacy or other means, I will follow Northwest CASA protocol and notify my supervisor immediately.

Signature

Date

Additional Resources:

Exposure to COVID-19:

[CDC - Public Health Guidance for Community-Related Exposure](#)

[CDC - Guidance for Healthcare Personnel with Potential Exposure](#)

[Illinois Travel Guidance Website](#)

[UPDATED CDC Quarantine Guidelines](#)

General Health & Safety Guidelines:

[CDC - How COVID-19 Spreads](#)

[CDC - How to Protect Yourself and Others](#)

[Restore IL Overview Page](#)

[IL Department of Commerce - Business Toolkit \(Posters, Handouts, Graphics, Etc.\)](#)

[CDC - If You Are Fully Vaccinated](#)

PPE:

[WHO: When and How to use Masks](#)

[OSHA - Training on PPE Videos \(Available in Spanish & English\)](#)

[CDC - How to Wear Cloth Face Coverings](#)

[CDC: How to safely put on & take off PPE](#)

[CDC: Recommended Guidance for Extended N95 Use](#)