COVID-19 Protocol
April 2020

In an effort to keep all Hospice of Central PA (HCP) team members healthy, and continue to serve our patients, HCP would like to share the following changes, reminders, and procedures we have put in place to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 and continue to provide the highest quality of care.

CHANGES

One of our biggest vulnerabilities is the proximity of HCP staff to one another in meetings. All team meetings (including huddle and administrative meetings) are now conducted remotely. Administrative or office-based staff are encouraged to join this practice and conduct interactions using the phone, text, Zoom or email rather than in person.

Carolyn’s House, our hospice residence, is limiting visitors to immediate family, the hospice care team and faith leaders. Visitors are required to complete a questionnaire and anyone exhibiting a temperature greater than 100.4 Fahrenheit is not granted access.

Visitors to the office will be asked to complete a questionnaire and anyone exhibiting a temperature of greater than 100.4 Fahrenheit is not be granted access. All in-person volunteer activities have been suspended. All staff are self-monitoring and recording their temperature daily.

Field staff are being asked to not enter the office building unless absolutely necessary. All HCP staff will be asked to complete the questionnaire daily and provide information to his or her supervisor before any travel outside of Central Pennsylvania.
With regard to the majority of our patients who are cared for in homes or facilities, HCP staff are following the guidance around risk mitigation:

1. Wash your hands frequently and with proper technique.
2. Clean surfaces and the things you touch frequently i.e. bag, phone, etc.
3. Make sure and in-person visit is necessary, i.e. attending a death, uncontrolled symptom or condition, admission, personal care visit, emergent emotional or spiritual needs, family issues impacting care delivery and self-harm/suicide assessment.
4. Call the home first and complete the screening questionnaire, including detailed information about symptoms, i.e. fever, dry cough, shortness of breath, diarrhea, and other GI issues. If staff are concerned based on the responses to the questionnaire, they are encouraged to reach out to their supervisor who will assess these concerns on a case-by-case basis.
5. In nursing facilities and personal care home, HCP staff are required to check in with the staff prior to the visit to assess risk and to follow all protocols for that facility.
6. Wear a mask for all in-person visits.

REMINDERS

All HCP field and office staff are provided with the following hygiene reminders routinely:

1. Please wash your hands and sanitize often.
2. Cough/sneeze into a tissue or your elbow and wash your hands or sanitize after each occurrence.
3. Face-to-face interactions during the course of your work is unavoidable, but please remain separated by a minimum of six feet during this period.
4. If you feel unwell, no matter how minor or slight, i.e., cold symptoms, please call out sick and stay at home. If you believe that you could meaningfully work from home, please discuss that with your supervisor to determine if such an arrangement is possible.

In addition, HCP staff have been provided with CDC guidance to manage healthcare personnel exposure to COVID-19.

PROCEDURES

HCP account executives have coordinated the protocols for all actively referring facilities so that HCP doctors, nurses, aides, social workers and chaplains know the procedures put in place in these different buildings. Updates are sent daily to team leaders.
The HCP leadership team continues to coordinate our response and preparedness with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and local public health departments.

If you have any questions about HCP or hospice and palliative care at this time, please do not hesitate to reach out to the following members of the leadership team (717) 732-1000.

Gil Brown, President and Chief Executive Officer
Michelle Campbell, RN, Director of Clinical Services
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