

Emergency Preparedness Program – Infection Control AD.E14

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POLICY:

Lifesong Hospice and Palliative Care management and staff will utilize infection control procedures in emergency situations. In cases of emergencies that are the result of internal or external significant health threats to Lifesong Hospice and Palliative Care's patient population or staff, procedures will be implemented to protect patients from exposure to infectious disease. Staff will adhere to workplace practices described in Lifesong Hospice and Palliative Care's infection prevention and control policies.

PROCEDURE:

1. In cases of emergencies that put patients at risk for emergent infectious diseases (EID), administrative controls will be implemented that may include:
 - a. Screening;
 - b. Isolation;
 - c. Visitor policies; and
 - d. Employee absentee plans.
2. Clinical leadership, under the direction of the Director of Clinical Operations, will monitor EIDs through local, state and federal information sites and will:
 - a. Monitor changes in existing organisms and or immigration, tourism, or other circumstances; and
 - b. Inform administrative leadership as needed on potential risks to Lifesong Hospice and Palliative Care patients and staff.
3. Administrative leadership, under the direction of the Executive Director, is responsible for assigning staff to:
 - a. Maintain an adequate supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) that includes:
 1. Moisture barrier gowns,
 2. Face shields,
 3. Foot and head coverings,
 4. Surgical masks,
 5. Assorted sizes of disposable N95 respirators, and
 6. Gloves.

Note: An adequate amount is considered enough for several days, in consideration of storage costs and space.

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4. Administrative leadership, under the direction of the Executive Director, is responsible for developing plans with vendors to assure adequate food supply, medications, sanitizing agents, and PPE in the event of a disruption to normal business.
5. Administrative and clinical staff will regularly participate in a minimum of two (2) practice drills as part of ongoing emergency preparedness training.
6. When Lifesong Hospice and Palliative Care is notified by any public health authority (federal, state, or local) that an EID is likely to or has spread to the patient or staff population, Lifesong Hospice and Palliative Care will activate specific surveillance and screening as instructed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Pennsylvania Department of Health, and/or the local public health authorities.
7. The Director of Clinical Operations will research the specific signs, symptoms, incubation period, route of infection, the risks of exposure, and the recommendations provided by the CDC, Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA), and other relevant local, state, and Federal public health agencies.
8. The Director of Clinical Operations will work with the Hospice Medical Director, clinical and administrative leadership, the Human Resources Director, local and state public health authorities, and others as needed to implement the recommendations.
9. The Director of Clinical Operations will review and revise internal procedures, and confirm an adequate supply exists for medications, environmental cleaning agents, and PPE as indicated by the specific disease threat.
10. Staff will be educated on the exposure risks, symptoms, and prevention of the EID. Special emphasis will be focused on reviewing basic infection prevention and control procedures, the use of PPE, isolation, handwashing, and other infection control strategies.
11. If the EID is spread through an airborne route, Lifesong Hospice and Palliative Care will activate the respiratory protection plan to protect employees who will be caring for a patient with a suspected or a known case of the EID.
12. Patients and families will be provided with information about the disease and Lifesong Hospice and Palliative Care's strategy for caring for patients as warranted.

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13. Contractors and other relevant stakeholders will be briefed on Lifesong Hospice and Palliative Care’s procedures related to minimizing risks of exposure.
14. Lifesong Hospice and Palliative Care administration will assure signs are posted at all entry locations regarding hand sanitation and respiratory etiquette and/or other prevention strategies relevant to the route of infection along with instructions that anyone who is ill must not enter the building.
15. In the event of confirmed cases within Lifesong Hospice and Palliative Care’s patient and/or staff population, Lifesong Hospice and Palliative Care may consider closing the Hospice to new admissions along with limiting visitors based on the advice of local public health authorities.
16. Lifesong Hospice and Palliative Care will follow the CDC’s guidelines for environmental cleaning specific to the EID, in addition to routine cleaning, for the duration of the threat.
17. Lifesong Hospice and Palliative Care will use appropriate physical plant alterations as recommended by local, state, and federal public health authorities, up to and including the following:
 - a. Use of private rooms for high-risk patients;
 - b. Plastic barriers;
 - c. Sanitations stations; and
 - d. Special areas for contaminated wastes.
18. Employees will be educated on Lifesong Hospice and Palliative Care’s plan to control the EID. The plan will be developed with the guidance of public health authorities and may include:
 - a. Reporting any suspected exposure to the EID while off duty to their supervisor and to public health authorities;
 - b. Precautionary removal of employees who report an actual or suspected exposure to the EID;
 - c. Self-screening for symptoms prior to reporting to work; and
 - d. Prohibiting staff from reporting to work if they are sick until cleared to work by appropriate medical authorities and in compliance with appropriate labor laws.

When a Hospice patient shows signs or symptoms of the suspected EID, the patient will be placed in isolation and public health authorities will be notified.

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1. Lifesong Hospice and Palliative Care staff will follow isolation procedures, including all recommended PPE for staff at risk of exposure.

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2. Clinical leadership will assure the number of staff assigned to enter any patient isolation room is kept to a minimum.
 - a. Specific staff will be specially trained in the specifics of the EID;
 - b. Specific staff will be prepared to care for the patient who is infected due to vaccination status, medical clearance, and fit tested for respiratory protection; and
 - c. Additional or “just in time” staff will receive training and supervision in the mode of transmission of the EID and the use of appropriate EID.
3. If possible, the patient will be asked to wear a facemask while staff is in the room.
4. Control activities such as management of infectious waste, cleaning the isolation room, contact tracing of individuals exposed to the EID, and monitoring for additional cases will be diligently performed.
5. Isolation protocols will be implemented throughout the facility, including but not limited to:
 - a. Assuring the availability of additional isolation rooms;
 - b. Cancellation of group activities; and
 - c. Delaying social dining until the threat is passed.
6. Lifesong Hospice and Palliative Care will activate quarantine interventions for patients and staff with suspected exposure to the EID as directed by local and state public health authorities, and with guidance from the CDC.

Human Resource Considerations:

1. Lifesong Hospice and Palliative Care will consider the following factors when determining action(s) to take to assure adequate staffing to care for patients:
 - a. The likelihood of the infectious disease being transmitted to patients and other employees;
 - b. The method of the spread of the disease (i.e., through contact with bodily fluids, contaminated air, contaminated surfaces);
 - c. Precautions that can be taken to prevent the spread of the infectious disease; and
 - d. Any other relevant factors.

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3. Once the above-named factors have been considered, Lifesong Hospice and Palliative Care leadership will determine the extent to which exposed employees or those who are showing signs of the infection must be precluded from contact with patients and other employees.
4. Whatever action is necessary to reduce the spread of the infection will be applied uniformly to all staff in like circumstances.
5. Leadership will make reasonable accommodations for employees where possible, i.e., employees may work from home if their job description permits.
6. Employees may use sick leave, vacation time, and FMLA where appropriate while they are out of work.
7. Employees may return to work when cleared by a licensed physician, however additional precautions may be taken to protect patients.
8. Employees who refuse to take the precautions set out in this and all infection prevention and control policies will be subject to disciplinary action.

DEFINITIONS:**Emerging Infectious Disease (EID)**

Infectious diseases whose incidence in humans has increased in the past two decades or threatens to increase in the near future have been defined as “emerging.” These diseases, which respect no nation boundaries, include:

- New infections resulting from changes or evolution of existing organisms;
- Known infections spreading to new geographic areas or populations;
- Previously unrecognized infections appearing in areas undergoing ecologic transformation; and
- Old infections re-emerging as a result of antimicrobial resistance in known agents or breakdowns in public health measures.

Pandemic

A sudden infectious disease outbreak that becomes very widespread and affect a whole region, a continent, or the world due to a susceptible population. By definition, a true pandemic causes a high degree of mortality.

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Separation of an individual or group reasonably suspected to have been exposed to a communicable disease but who is not yet ill (displaying signs and symptoms) from those who have not been so exposed, to prevent the spread of the disease.

HELPFUL WEBSITES:<https://emergency.cdc.gov/>https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/healthcarefacilities/infectious_diseases.html<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tzpz5fko-fg>

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