



# QUICK REFERENCE:

## Communicating with Distant Families



### Within 24 hours of patient arrival:

- In **ACP tab** use SMARTPHRASE **“.COVIDFAMILYADMIT”** to establish contact and plan future communication
- Encourage download of BlueJeans app (free) for family to use with you
- Essential items only may be delivered to patients: have families call **(267) 785.8585** for details
- Families can read more at [www.pennmedicine.org/coronavirus](http://www.pennmedicine.org/coronavirus)
- **Can be brief if you are stabilizing patient, set up plan for next update**



### Family Meetings/Goals of Care:

- Do not de-prioritize due to logistical challenges
- **Use videoconferencing when possible**
- **Use “ACP” tab** in PennChart and SMARTPHRASE **“.COVIDFAMILYGOC”** to guide conversation and document

#### For actively dying patients or when withholding/withdrawing life sustaining therapies:

- » Family may be permitted to visit: **don’t promise**, check with nursing unit supervisor for policies
- » Family members who have/suspected to have COVID-19 **MAY NOT VISIT**
- » If desired, videoconferencing can be used to observe death or dying process
- » Let families know if they cannot arrive safely in time, a staff member will sit bedside if possible

#### For COVID-19 positive or suspected patients: see FAQs and policies for death and dying

- Other Resources for patients and families (may be limited during surge):
  - » Pastoral care – use local referral system
  - Encourage use of patient/family’s own clergy or community support systems
  - » Palliative care – consider consult or curbside



### Routine Communication:

- **Daily updates as default plan:** assign team member during rounds
- Document for accountability and transparency: use SMARTPHRASE **“.COVIDFAMILYUPDATE”** for template
- BlueJeans is preferred. Others (Skype, FaceTime) if requested by Primary contact.
- **Facilitate virtual visits between patient and family/caregiver**
- Use the bedside phone or the patient’s own device(s) – **DO NOT** bring other devices into patient room
  - » Use videoconferencing “through the glass” (doors/windows) if needed



### Disclosing COVID-19/SARS-CoV-2 Diagnosis:

- Use SMARTPHRASE **“.COVIDFAMILYDX”** for template and script
- Direct to [www.pennmedicine.org/coronavirus](http://www.pennmedicine.org/coronavirus) for FAQs and more information for families



For all questions, families can call **Penn Medicine’s COVID-19 Hotline: (267) 785.8585**