



**Healthcare
Excellence**
Canada

**Excellence
en santé**
Canada

Essential Together Communications Toolkit

**Who knows which meds are
which and how to comfort
their loved one?**

#EssentialCarePartners #EssentialTogether





About Healthcare Excellence Canada

Healthcare Excellence Canada works with partners to spread innovation, build capability, and catalyze policy change so that everyone in Canada has safe and high-quality healthcare. Through collaboration with patients, caregivers and people working in healthcare, we turn proven innovations into lasting improvements in all dimensions of healthcare excellence. Launched in 2021, HEC brings together the Canadian Patient Safety Institute and Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement.

HEC is an independent, not-for-profit charity funded primarily by Health Canada. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of Health Canada.



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Essential Together Communications Toolkit

#EssentialCarePartners | #EssentialTogether

Introduction

Thank you for your support of Essential Together. We value and appreciate your help in spreading the message of the importance of welcoming and engaging Essential Care Partners.

Essential Care Partners are vital members of the care team who provide consistent support to a patient throughout their care journey – improving safety, care, and the well-being of all involved.

As a response to COVID-19, many health and care facilities across the country have implemented visitor restrictions that prohibited Essential Care Partners from being physically present as partners in care. The impacts and harms as a result of these restrictions have been widely experienced by those receiving care, their caregivers and staff alike. Essential Together provides implementation support for policy guidance that was co-created by those who make policy, those who implement the policy and those who experience and are impacted by policy.

Foundational to this policy guidance are three main principles:

1. Recognizing the value of the role that families and caregivers play as Essential Care Partners.
2. Being able to differentiate between a visitor (who has a social role) and that of Essential Care Partner, who provides physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual support for the patient
3. And that patients, families, caregivers are engaged in the development of patient and family centred policies and practices.

While Essential Together initially focused on the ‘reintegration’ of Essential Care Partners, we know that more than ‘reintegration’, resiliency is needed in the system, to ‘crisis-proof’ our policies to ensure that what happened at the start of the pandemic never happens again.

How to Engage

Essential Care Partner Tools and Resources

Access resources for you, your colleagues, and your patients¹ to learn the valuable role of Essential Care Partners, and how organizations can safely re-integrate them into health and care settings. Through Healthcare Excellence Canada's Essential Together program, we have developed and curated tools and resources that support the safe reintegration of Essential Care Partners.

Resources are available at <https://bit.ly/3p0wzAA>

Attend Essential Together Huddles

Essential Together Monthly Huddles:

- Bring together those who create, implement or experience family presence policy during the pandemic and beyond.
- Create an open and safe supportive environment for people to learn from and connect with others facing similar challenges.

The National Huddles are:

- Open to anyone interested in safely welcoming Essential Care Partners in their organization
- 45 minutes long
- Include a 15-minute presentation from subject matter experts and/or organizations sharing how they're reintegrating essential care partners during the pandemic; and
- 20-25 minutes of group discussion to help encourage peer-to-peer learning and support

We welcome you to join and share your experiences, both successes and challenges. We want participants to come away from each Huddle with practical tools and/or learning they can apply straight away.

Join the conversation: <https://bit.ly/3yFj78v>

Take the Essential Together Pledge

We're asking health and care organizations across the country to join us in committing to the Essential Together Pledge – a way to demonstrate your commitment to Essential Care Partners, and to review and develop policies and practices that will crisis-proof caregiver presence policies into the future, whether in times of crisis or not.

Take the pledge: <https://bit.ly/3F5lx1k>

Social Media Messaging

This section helps you promote the #EssentialTogether campaign using prewritten posts for Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook. Copy the text and paste it into your posts and include them in your posts to boost visibility. Plus, follow us on Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook to share our content and spread the word!

Twitter (Be sure to tag us @HE_ES_Canada)

- The #EssentialTogether change package is intended to help shift existing visitor and caregiver presence policies towards person-centred care. Discover how it can support development & implementation of policies that welcome & engage #EssentialCarePartners <https://bit.ly/3D90snJ>
- .@HE_ES_Canada has prepared a change package to support #EssentialCarePartner policies to support their presence in health and care settings. This resource focuses on key steps in the journey to implement meaningful organizational change. Learn more: <https://bit.ly/3D90snJ>
- .@HE_ES_Canada is recognizing the value of #EssentialCarePartners as vital members of the care team. Join us in welcoming & engaging Essential Care Partners <https://bit.ly/3p0wzAA>
- We recognize the value of #EssentialCarePartners as active members of care teams that benefit patient care, patient safety & outcomes. Thank you to all #EssentialCarePartners working to improve healthcare with & for everyone in Canada #EssentialTogether <https://bit.ly/3p0wzAA>
- As facilities across the country respond to #COVID19, how can we safely welcome #EssentialCarePartners? Check out the tools and resources at <https://bit.ly/3p0wzAA> developed in partnership with #EssentialCarePartners, patients and other healthcare partners #EssentialTogether

- Join the Essential Together Huddles, a series connecting those who create, implement or experience family presence policy during the pandemic and beyond <https://bit.ly/3yFj78v> #EssentialTogether #EssentialCarePartners
- How much do you know about #EssentialCarePartners? Take and share the quiz to test your knowledge on the importance of Essential Care Partners and their vital roles <https://bit.ly/3pWU5Pp> #EssentialTogether
- Is your organization fostering a welcoming environment for #EssentialCarePartners & following best practices for engaging them? Use the organizational self-assessment to find out! <https://bit.ly/3JNkveg> #EssentialTogether
- #EssentialCarePartners are different from general visitors. They're identified & designated by patients & play a significant role in #PatientSafety & physical, psychological & emotional support. Find out how to support your loved ones as an ECP: <https://bit.ly/3p0wzAA>
- 1/2 #EssentialCarePartners are different from general visitors. They're identified & designated by patients & play a significant role in #PatientSafety & physical, psychological & emotional support.
2/2 Show your commitment to developing policies that support #EssentialCarePartners by taking the #EssentialTogether Pledge here: <https://bit.ly/3F5lx1k>
- Does your organization value the role of #EssentialCarePartners? Take the #EssentialTogether pledge to show commitment in working w/ those receiving care, caregivers & staff to develop & implement policies supporting patient & caregiver partnership in care <https://bit.ly/3F5lx1k>
- #EssentialCarePartners play a significant role in patient safety and providing physical, psychological, and emotional support. Find out how to support your loved ones as an Essential Care Partner at <https://bit.ly/3p0wzAA> #EssentialTogether
- Being involved in a loved one's care journey can improve safety, care, and the well-being of all involved. How much do you know about Essential Care Partners? Test your knowledge about #EssentialCarePartners by taking our quiz. <https://bit.ly/3pWU5Pp> #EssentialTogether
- How much do you know about #EssentialCarePartners? Take and share the quiz to test your knowledge on the importance of Essential Care Partners and their vital role. <https://bit.ly/3pWU5Pp> #EssentialTogether
- 1/2 #EssentialCarePartners can help their loved ones best by

- Learning about their loved one's health issue so they can ask the right questions and know how to best assist care teams.

- Being a second set of eyes, ears, and voice for their loved one if needed.

#EssentialTogether

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- Comforting their loved one physically, mentally, and emotionally.

- Being a champion for their loved one by encouraging them and documenting their progress.

Find out how to support your loved ones as an #EssentialCarePartner at

<https://bit.ly/3p0wzAA> #EssentialTogether

LinkedIn/Facebook (Be sure to tag us @Healthcare Excellence Canada)

- HEC has prepared a resource to support the development and implementation of policies that welcome and engage Essential Care Partners. The Essential Together change package is intended to help health and care facilities shift existing visitor and caregiver presence policies towards person-centred care. Discover how the change package can support your organization in safely welcoming and engaging Essential Care Partners into health and care settings. <https://bit.ly/3D90snJ>
- Healthcare Excellence Canada has prepared a change package to support the development and implementation of policies that welcome and engage #EssentialCarePartners. It is intended to help partners shift existing visitor and caregiver presence policies towards person centred care based on the three foundational principles. Learn more about this resource and how it focuses on key steps in the journey to implement meaningful organizational change <https://bit.ly/3D90snJ>
- #EssentialCarePartners are different from general visitors. They're identified and designated by patients and they play a significant role in patient safety and physical, psychological, and emotional support. When your organization commits to the Essential Together pledge, you become an Essential Care Partner champion. Show your commitment to developing policies that support #EssentialCarePartners by taking the pledge: <https://bit.ly/3F5lx1k>
- Does your organization value the role of #EssentialCarePartners? Are you committed to developing and implementing policies supporting patient and caregiver partnership in care? Become and Essential Care Partner champion by taking the #EssentialTogether

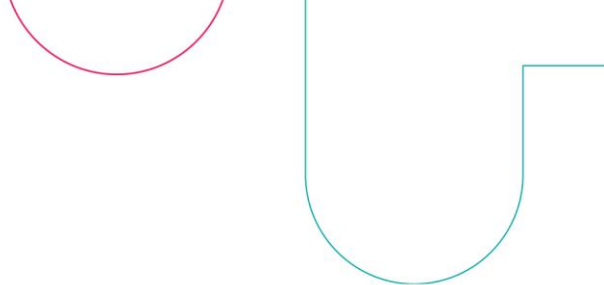
pledge and show your commitment in working with those receiving care, caregivers and staff: <https://bit.ly/3F5lx1k>

- Did you know #EssentialCarePartners are different from general visitors? They're identified and designated by patients and play a significant role in the care journey, including improving patient safety and providing physical, psychological, and emotional support. Find out how to support your loved ones as an Essential Care Partner at <https://bit.ly/3p0wzAA> #EssentialTogether
- As a response to COVID-19, many health and care facilities across the country have implemented visitor restrictions that prohibited Essential Care Partners from being physically present as partners in care. Healthcare Excellence Canada is recognizing the value of Essential Care Partners as vital members of the care team – improving safety, care, and the well-being of all involved. Join us in welcoming and engaging #EssentialCarePartners <https://bit.ly/3p0wzAA> #EssentialTogether
- Join Healthcare Excellence Canada for monthly Essential Together huddles for discussions on how organizations are supporting #EssentialCarePartners. Join the conversation: <https://bit.ly/3yFj78v> #EssentialTogether
- Join the Essential Together Huddles, a series connecting those who create, implement or experience family presence policy during the pandemic and beyond. The monthly huddles create an open, safe, and supportive space for people to share with and learn from others facing similar challenges and enable learning across various health and care settings. <https://bit.ly/3yFj78v> #EssentialTogether #EssentialCarePartners
- As the pandemic continues to evolve across the country, #EssentialCarePartners should continue to be safely re-integrated at all times. Check out the resources and guidance at <https://bit.ly/3p0wzAA> that were developed through the #EssentialTogether program, in partnership with Essential Care Partners, patients and other healthcare partners. #EssentialTogether
- How much do you know about #EssentialCarePartners? Take and share the quiz to test your knowledge on the importance of Essential Care Partners and their vital roles. <https://bit.ly/3pWU5Pp> #EssentialTogether
- Essential Care Partners can help improve safety, care and the well-being of all involved. Is your organization fostering a welcoming environment for Essential Care Partners and following best practices for engaging them? Use the organizational self-assessment to find out! After you've completed it, you can learn more from our learning bundles that will help you strengthen your program. <https://bit.ly/3JNkveg> #EssentialTogether

- Their care is essential. Do you empower #EssentialCarePartners? Take the Essential Care Partner quiz to learn more about them and how they can help. Take the quiz: <https://bit.ly/3pWU5Pp> #EssentialTogether
- Essential Care Partners can help provide safer care. #EssentialCarePartners improve safety, care and the well-being of all involved. Take our quiz to learn more about ECPs and how they can help. Learn More: <https://bit.ly/3pWU5Pp> #EssentialTogether
- #Essential Care Partners play a significant role in patient safety and providing physical, psychological, and emotional support. Find out how to support your loved ones as an Essential Care Partner at <https://bit.ly/3p0wzAA> #EssentialTogether
- Are you looking for resources to support the safe re-entry of #EssentialCarePartners? Patients and Essential Care Partners can access resources that were developed through the Essential Together program, in partnership with Essential Care Partners, patients and other healthcare partners <https://bit.ly/3p0wzAA> #EssentialTogether
- Are you taking an active role in the care of a loved one? Learn more about Essential Care Partners and their vital role in safety, quality, and well-being. Take the #EssentialCarePartners quiz <https://bit.ly/3pWU5Pp> #EssentialTogether
- #EssentialCarePartners can help their loved ones best by learning about their loved one's health issue so they can ask the right questions and know how to best assist care teams; Being a second set of eyes, ears, and voice for their loved one if needed; Comforting their loved one physically, mentally, and emotionally; Being a champion for their loved one by encouraging them and documenting their progress. <https://bit.ly/3p0wzAA> #EssentialTogether

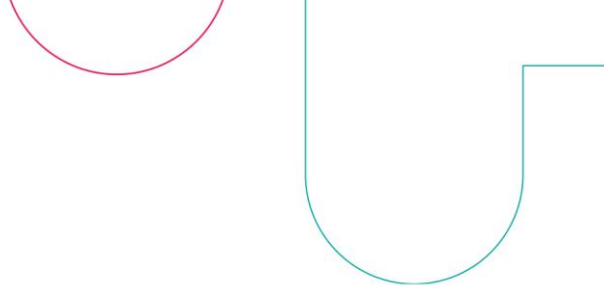
Patient Safety Fact Sheet

- Canada continues to face persistent challenges in equitably providing timely access to safe and high-quality care that delivers good healthcare outcomes, ranking 10 of 11 developed countries in health system performance.²
- Unintended harm in the health sector is a leading cause of death in Canada,³ and there are gaps in patient experience and outcomes, care team well-being, and value.
- Prior to COVID-19, family presence policies were embedded in the majority of hospitals across Canada, with a Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement study showing 73 percent of surveyed hospitals in January 2020 had accommodating policies.⁴ This openness to caregiver presence dropped dramatically with COVID-19; none of the hospitals surveyed again in March 2020 had accommodating policies.^{5,6} Although recent



policies indicate a more balanced approach to enable the physical presence of caregivers, implementation of these directives remains inconsistent within provinces, territories, regions and organizations. As hospitals and other healthcare facilities emerge from the pandemic, there is an opportunity to welcome back Essential Care Partners.

- For patients, Essential Care Partners, and families:
 - Adopting family presence policies in hospitals, concurrently with other interventions, can reduce patient falls by 35 percent and injuries sustained by falls by 62 percent.⁷
 - The introduction of family caregivers in the patient care process can reduce patient anxiety and dissatisfaction.^{8,9,10}
 - Families subjected to visitor restrictions often report higher levels of stress and anxiety.¹¹
 - Patients in medically vulnerable situations (e.g., intensive care units, older adult patients) are more likely to experience a medical error, costly non-essential care, physical and/or emotional harm, social isolation and inconsistencies in care when families and caregivers are restricted from participating in care.^{12,13}
 - People with culturally diverse needs and preferences are more likely to see decreased rates of depression, reduced social isolation, and lowered risk of falls and hospitalization with the presence of family and caregivers.^{14,15}
- For staff support and burnout:
 - Hospital staff often experience gaps in acquiring vital information when family caregivers have been restricted entry into healthcare facilities.¹⁶
 - Results from a 2007 randomized controlled study involving 20 long-term care homes found that facilities that implemented an intervention program designed to improve communication and cooperation between families, residents and staff reported reduced behavioural symptoms among residents, improved communication and care involvement, fewer conflicts between staff and families, and reduced rates of depression among staff.¹⁷
- Safe re-integration of ECPs:
 - There is no evidence to support that restrictive visitor policies reduce outbreaks and mortality within long-term care settings.¹⁸

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- Family presence and flexible visitation do not cause additional harm in the form of infectious disease transmission. Essential care partners should be supported in following infection prevention and control protocols that may include masking, vaccination and other protective measures. ^{19,20,21}
 - Approximately one-third of family caregivers already carry out technical aspects of care, and there is capacity to learn and carry out IPAC procedures as necessary. ^{22 23}

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- ¹²Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement. “Policy Guidance for the Reintegration of Caregivers as Essential Care Partners.” (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.cfhi-fcass.ca/innovations-tools-resources/itemdetail/2020/11/19/Essential-Care-Partners-Policy-Guidance>
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