

Information for the families and/or carers of elderly patients in hospital

Version 31 - March 2020

Given the current situation where hospital department visiting is banned, special care should be taken when communicating with the families and carers of our elderly patients.

Such communication may take several forms, according to the organisation and medium, but here are some guidelines for each geriatric organisation of the Greater Paris Public Hospital Authority (AP-HP) to bear in mind:

- Send out an information letter to everyone regarding the ban on visiting (we have provided you with the template letter below which can be adapted as necessary).
- Make a telephone call to every designated contact, family or carer when the patient is admitted to the department, followed by very regular telephone calls to provide updates.
- As much as possible, ensure patients have access to a mobile telephone, with help for medical staff on how to use them, if necessary. (On a practical note, remember to ensure the patient has the charger.)
- Set up a video communication system and put in place procedures to ensure that the maximum number of patients have access to it, everywhere, if possible.
- Put in place a procedure for managing any parcels left by families at the hospital or department reception.
- Put in place a procedure for dealing with patients' laundry (in some cases, this is already dealt with independently by the department, whereas in others, it often falls to relatives).

We have provided a template letter below for you to inform families of information relevant to them, which you may adapt, according to the procedures put in place in your department or hospital.

Addressed to the families of patients who are hospitalised in the hospital's
Geriatrics Departments

SUBJECT: Coronavirus Covid-19: information for families

Dear Sir or Madam,

Due to the Coronavirus epidemic, and with a view to protecting our elderly, vulnerable patients who appear to be the most exposed to the severe forms of the infection, **visiting is forbidden in the departments** of our hospital.

We know that this decision is a very hard one for your family members in hospital, and for yourselves. Therefore, we wanted to make some arrangements that we wanted to inform you about:

- As usual, the healthcare teams remain of course at your disposal to provide you with news about hospital patients.
- Staying in contact with your family member in hospital remains our first priority. In the absence of the option of physical contact, it is still possible to have contact by telephone, or contact via video-calls.
- To do so, depending on the patient's capabilities, a mobile phone (and a charging cable) are often very helpful, and our nursing team are available to help your family member to use it.
- We are also doing all we can to set up a system of contact by video. Please do not hesitate to call the secretary's office for the department where your family member is hospitalised to find out more about these arrangements.
- It remains possible for your family member to receive their post, clean washing and other packages (of a limited size and not containing perishable foodstuffs). We have set up a procedure that enables you to leave packages, which will be passed onto them by our teams.

Please be reassured that we are doing everything in our power to ensure the safety and well-being of your family members. Should you need to contact, we are always available.

Yours sincerely.

