

# ASPR TRACIE Technical Assistance Request

**Request Receipt Date (by ASPR TRACIE):** 13 April 2022

**Response Date:** 20 April 2022

**Type of TA Request:** Complex

## Request:

The requestor asked ASPR TRACIE for information or resources specific to operationalizing or scaling up/ down COVID-19 restrictions in a hospital regarding masking, visitation, testing, and other issues.

## Response:

The ASPR TRACIE Team reviewed existing materials in our resource library, namely our [COVID-19 Resources page](#). We also conducted a search online for relevant materials and reached out to our ASPR TRACIE Subject Matter Expert Cadre (SME) members. Section I of this document includes comments from SMEs. Section II of this document includes resources gathered that may be helpful to this request.

## I. ASPR TRACIE SME Cadre Member Comments

Please note: These are direct quotes or paraphrased comments from emails and other correspondence provided by ASPR TRACIE SME Cadre members in response to this specific request. They do not necessarily express the views of ASPR or ASPR TRACIE.

### SME Cadre Member 1:

- This is a challenging question for several reasons, including geographic considerations, illness outbreak differences, and whether the hospital is part of a corporate structure.
- Suggested recommendations for consideration include:
  - Have regular conversations and stay connected with your local and state health departments for information on their latest recommendations and specific mandates.
  - Communicate with local hospitals and your state hospital association for best practice recommendations and practices.
  - Start restrictions once the risk is realized. It is better to act sooner rather than later. Restrictions should be tightened as the situation worsens and loosened as it improves.
  - Provide effective messaging to visitors and staff; include rationale for action whenever possible.
  - Work with local media and other organizations to promote visitation restriction awareness and explanations behind these actions.
  - Use volunteers or redeployed staff to supplement gate staffing as practical.

### **SME Cadre Member 2:**

- Setting thresholds for visitor restrictions and other measures is good practice. However, I am not aware of any specific triggers to do this.
- Some of the factors to consider are variable, such as the degree of severity of the variant that is provoking the surge, and the susceptibility of the population (e.g., how prevalent/protective are vaccines).
- Whenever a community is experiencing a rapid spread of a variant that is resulting in hospital capacity issues (or is expected to based on behavior in other areas), that would make a strong case for implementing visitor controls to prevent exposures.

### **SME Cadre Member 3:**

- Most healthcare organizations across the country monitor the trends of the communities they serve. When cases are surging to the point that healthcare providers and senior leadership are concerned, that is when protocols should be changed within the organization.

## **II. Select Relevant Resources**

ASPR TRACIE. (2020). [Healthcare System Considerations for Resumption of Services during COVID-19](#).

This resource highlights interrelated issues for the healthcare system to consider as they address their current status, restore services that have been curbed, maintain readiness for potential future waves of COVID-19 patients over the next two years, and adapt to improve their operations based on lessons learned.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021). [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Pandemic](#). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

This updated page recommends infection prevention and control (IPC) practices during the COVID-19 pandemic, and particular IPC practices when caring for a patient with suspected or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection.

Redacted Author. (2022). Personal Protective Equipment Guidance for COVID-19. (NOTE: Contact the [ASPR TRACIE Assistance Center](#) for a copy of this document.)

This document provides guidance for personal protective equipment use during COVID-19 for healthcare personnel working in hospitals and other healthcare facilities.