

Guidelines for Inpatient Passes during COVID-19

March 24, 2020

Purpose:

To have a consistent, person-centred approach to inpatient passes across Nova Scotia Health Authority.

Principles:

1. Pass considerations should be consistent with current NSHA visitor restrictions.
2. Passes are an important part of treatment, the recovery process, and treatment plan for some inpatients.
3. Social distancing protocols are important to limit exposure and spread of COVID-19.
4. Clinical judgment needs to balance the individual needs of the patient with the potential risk of exposure to patients and staff on a unit.
5. The following guidelines are to be used in addition to the current policy and procedures in your program area.

Guidelines:

1. Community and home patient passes should be restricted with the exception of compassionate reasons or exceptional circumstance for plan of care considerations.
2. Patient passes out of hospital should be restricted to hospital grounds, and supervised to ensure social distancing is maintained.
3. If longer passes are considered for exceptional circumstances (e.g. compassionate reasons, discharge trials), remember:
 - a. A pass from hospital will not be approved if there is potential exposure to anyone in the home/situation who has symptoms, is on self-isolation, meets COVID-19 screening criteria, or is waiting for swab results.
 - b. Prior to leaving the unit, the patient should bring all belongings with them.
 - c. A phone check-in should be scheduled, and discharge should be completed over the phone, whenever possible.
 - d. The patient must agree to stay at home and not to travel, visit, attend other settings (stores, restaurants, etc.) in the community with the goal of maintaining physical distancing.
 - e. If the patient develops any symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they are to contact their unit immediately **by phone** for further instructions which will include contacting 811 and self-isolation.
 - f. Clinical team members are to screen the patient for symptoms upon return (as per IPAC guidelines).