

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

Pandemic Declaration Accountability
and Oversight Committee



Restrictions on hospital visitation under Pandemic Orders

Questionnaire

Purpose of questionnaire

The Pandemic Declaration Accountability and Oversight Committee, as part of its functions issued under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, is conducting a review of the Pandemic (Visitors to Hospitals and Care Facilities) Orders (Nos. 1 to 5) and the Pandemic (Public Safety) Order.

The Committee has issued this questionnaire to all Victorian hospitals to understand how the Orders has been implemented and to identify any issues hospitals have experienced related to the Orders.

The Committee notes that as of 11.59 pm 22 April 2022, restrictions on hospital visitation (except for the requirement to wear masks) were revoked. However, the Committee still wishes to understand the experience your organisation has had with the Orders, including the implementation of previous orders. In particular, challenges faced in enforcing the Orders and managing exemption requests.

Please note, this information may be used and published by the Committee as part its reporting.

Response

Please provide a response to the questionnaire by **9 May 2022**.

The completed questionnaire should be sent to: pdaoc@parliament.vic.gov.au.

Questions

1. Has your organisation implemented visitor restrictions that are in excess of the restrictions detailed in the orders? If so, when did this occur and in what circumstances?

No

2. Has your organisation received any complaints about visitor restrictions? If so, what were the outcomes of these?

Yes, complaints have been received relating to visitor restrictions. Outcomes that have resulted are:

1. Communication reminders to staff through the Tier Meetings
2. Review of Department guidelines at Incident Management Meetings
3. Review of other regional hospitals to compare BRHS policy and guidelines

3. Have there been instances where your organisation has misinterpreted the restrictions under the orders (e.g., when orders have changed or through confusing language in the content of the orders)?

No

4. How many applications for visiting exemptions has your organisation received and how many been approved?

In line with directions, records are destroyed after 28 days so unable to provide exact numbers however it is estimated that >95% of formal requests were granted. Some requests made directly to ward staff resulted in some visitors not being granted an exemption however if these were escalated to the Patient Services Coordinator /Clinical Operations Manager / Director Clinical Operations, exemptions were granted.

5. What staff member of your organisation has assessed applications for exemptions?

Patient Services Coordinators (PSC)
Clinical Operations Manager (COM)
Health Service Incident Commander/ DON

6. What steps were taken to inform all visitors and their relatives of visiting rules and capacity to apply for an exemption?

Facebook, web page and staff communication

7. What steps were taken to advise staff of the availability of the exemption process when dealing with the public and visitors to patients?

Facebook and webpage

8. What was your overall impression of the system, and could it have been improved?

It was extremely difficult for significant others who were unable to visit. It also demonstrated the vital role families play in appropriate and safe care.

A system that enabled visitors to each patient per day on some type of rotational basis may have been better but our physical space, IT systems and staff would not have been able to accommodate this.