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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Child and Adolescent Inpatient Program Facility Directors, Clinical Directors,  
Chief Nursing Officers

FROM: Thomas Smith, MD, Chief Medical Officer  
Anita Daniels, Associate Commissioner

DATE: March 18, 2020

SUBJECT: Addendum to visitor, volunteer and student restrictions at Psychiatric Centers  
with focus on visitors to child and adolescent patients

On March 14, 2020, OMH issued a guidance document regarding visitor, volunteer, and student restrictions at Psychiatric Centers. The following is meant to clarify that guidance for children and adolescent populations.

To promote mitigation of virus spread and social distancing, Psychiatric Centers should limit visitors to children and adolescents on inpatient units to only those who are essential to the care and wellbeing of the patient. Visitor requests should be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis with the following considerations:

- All individuals requesting to visit inpatient units should be screened.
- Once screened, visitors to children and adolescents should be limited to no more than two at a time.
- Prior to the meeting, infection control and mitigation precautions should be reviewed with all visitors including sharing guidance regarding hand washing, social distancing and hygiene with visitors and the patient.
- Visiting spaces should be large enough to allow for social distancing.
- Visiting spaces should be cleaned and disinfected in between visits.

To ensure that children and adolescents maintain communication with their family in the community, **each Psychiatric Center must ensure that patients have easily available means to stay in contact with family and others.** This includes ready access to phones, either through cellular or land lines. Additionally, patients who are deemed appropriate for the use of internet social media accounts should have the means to access them as needed. Every inpatient unit must identify multiple ways for patients to communicate.

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