During pandemics symptom-based cohorting may be required in Emergency Departments (ED) and Urgent Care Centers (UCC) when the need for private rooms exceeds capacity. Facilities should identify their capacity for isolation and potential cohorting spaces. FollowIPC recommendations. Contact local Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) personnel for guidance as required.

Patients exhibiting influenza-like illness (ILI) symptoms should immediately perform hand hygiene and don a procedure mask. As soon as possible, direct patients to a dedicated space. Patients should be separated based on exposure-risk or confirmed epidemiological link to new or emerging pathogens. When an emerging virus is circulating widely, it is reasonable to cohort all ILI positive patients together.

Communicable disease screening embedded in routine triage protocols should occur for all presenting patients. For up-to-date pre-triage/triage screening criteria and info, go toCOVID-19. Patients requiringAirborne Precautionsare not candidates for cohorting.

**Recommendations for cohorting spaces**

- Ensure IPCPoint-of-Care-Risk Assessment, Hand Hygiene, appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE Matrix), and appropriateEnvironmental Cleaning Guidelinesare followed.
- Use signage to identify area, restrict entry and inform about additional precautions required.
- Remove all non-essential equipment and furniture. Ensure all remaining items are cleanable. Refer toIPC Enhanced Environmental Cleaning during COVID-19(available on Insite) and RTU disinfectant wipes.
- Use disposable patient equipment when possible. Dedicate re-usable equipment for single patient use or clean and disinfect between patients.
- Provide alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) and masks for patient use.
- Cleaning will be done as per Environmental Service protocols.
- Evaluate the continued need for designated cohorting spaces on a daily basis and discontinue as soon as capacity allows.

**Recommendations for cohorting patients**

- Separate patients by at least two meters or with a physical barrier.
- Instruct patients to perform hand hygiene and keep mask on (mask poster/brochure).

**Resources**

For information on communicable diseases, see the AHS IPC Acute Care Resource Manual on theIPC Resource Manuals page.
Recommendations for Cohorting during Pandemic ED/UCC AHS Facilities | 2

References

