

COVID-19 Resource Nurses ensure staff and patient safety

Responding to a novel virus such as COVID-19 requires significant attention to infection prevention practices including isolation requirements, putting on and taking off personal protective equipment (PPE), and preventing the risk of cross contamination. Clinical practice changes around use of PPE were frequent, sometimes daily, as knowledge of the virus evolved. Protocols varied regularly based on the ever-changing landscape of availability, procurement and CDC recommendations.

A new role called “COVID-19 Resource Nurse” was implemented to ensure that every person who comes in contact with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patient is protected with the appropriate PPE. These resource nurses are strategically placed in all areas of the Hospital where COVID-19 patients are cared for. They provide training and support, and monitor every person entering a patient room — whether it is another nurse, physician, respiratory therapist, housekeeper or phlebotomist. COVID-19 Resource Nurses are empowered to “stop the line” for infection prevention if work standards are breached.

Responsibilities include:

- Observe donning and doffing of staff entering and exiting COVID-19 patient rooms and the cleaning process for face shield and eye protection
- Assist with Code Blue response by ensuring compliance with correct donning and doffing procedures of the Code Blue team members responding to the emergency
- Provide just-in-time training for staff newly assigned to suspect and confirmed COVID-19 patients
- Assist with coordination of patient transports utilizing the special procedure for transporting COVID-19 patients and monitor the process for correct technique
- Communicate updates to staff regarding COVID-19 patient care and infection prevention practices

Comprehensive care of the COVID-19 patient is complex and changes frequently. The role of the COVID-19 Resource Nurse is critical to ensuring safety of the frontline team so they can continue to provide exceptional patient-centered care.

Before anyone, like nurse Kevin Cole, BSN, RN, enters the room of a patient with coronavirus, they don PPE in the presence of a COVID-19 Resource Nurse who ensures everything is secure and done correctly.

