

El Camino Hospital Uses Allen Technologies Interactive Patient System For Influenza Visitation Alerts

The 2014-2015 influenza season was especially challenging in California, where four flu-related fatalities were reported in the San Francisco Bay Area in January alone. Like in previous flu seasons, hospitals like Allen Technologies' client El Camino Hospital routinely implement restrictions on hospital visitors during the flu months to protect patients and employees from exposure to the flu viruses.

INFECTION CONTROL Temporary Visiting Restrictions Policy	CONTROL DE LAS INFECCIONES Política temporal sobre las restricciones de las visitas
<p>To reduce the risk of influenza to our patients, visitors and staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please do not visit if you have any flu-like symptoms • Please no visitors under age 16 • Cleanse your hands frequently <p>Children are at greater risk for complications of certain respiratory infections, especially influenza, and are more likely to represent a health risk to patients. This policy will continue as long as necessary during the influenza season.</p>	 <p>Para disminuir el riesgo de gripe para nuestros pacientes, visitantes y miembros del personal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evite las visitas si tiene algún síntoma seudogripal. • No se permite el ingreso de los visitantes menores de 16 años. • Lávese bien las manos con frecuencia. <p>Los niños corren un riesgo mayor de tener complicaciones a causa de ciertas infecciones respiratorias, especialmente gripe, y es más probable que representen un riesgo para la salud de los pacientes. Esta política seguirá vigente mientras sea necesario durante la temporada gripal.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"> www.elcaminohospital.org/flu  El Camino Hospital <small>THE HOSPITAL OF SILICON VALLEY</small> </p>	

So in mid-January 2015, when the Centers for Disease Control reported at least 45 flu-related deaths nationwide - and California persistently tracking as a high-alert region - El Camino Hospital set its temporary visitation restrictions in place at its Los Gatos and Mountain View hospital campuses. On Jan. 14, the hospital announced that individuals exhibiting influenza symptoms and children under the age of 16 would be restricted from visiting patients hospitalized at both of the hospital's Bay Area locations. In addition, the hospital noted that all patients and visitors would be required to wear a mask in the emergency department.

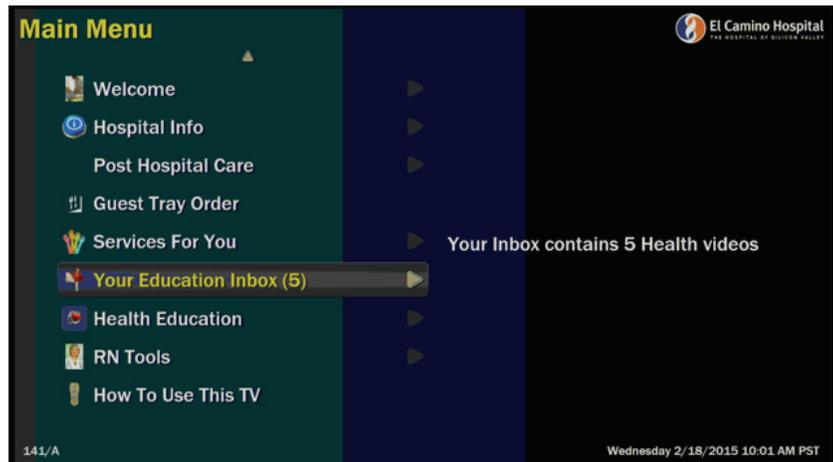
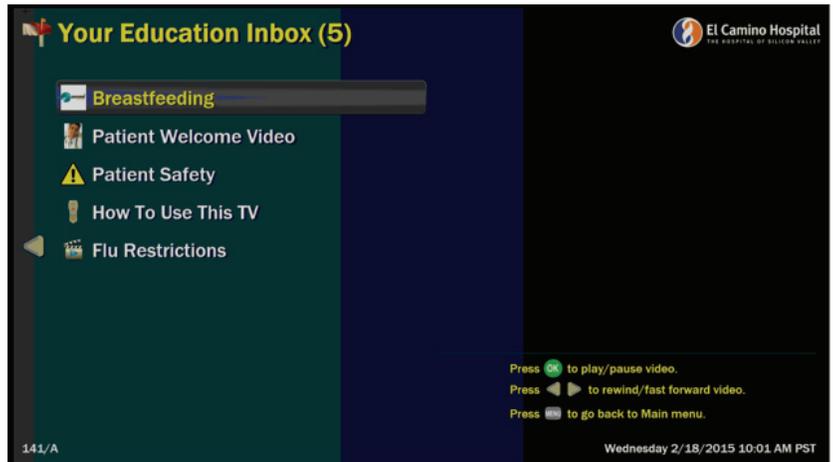
Unlike previous seasons, though, the El Camino Hospital communications team added a creative new resource to its arsenal of communications tools to make patients and visitors aware of the restrictions and encourage compliance. A long-time client of the Allen Technologies Interactive Patient System, the hospital team mentioned the challenge to its Allen Technologies account team, which immediately suggested using the interactive patient system on patient room televisions to push out flu visitation updates.

“The Allen Technologies team was very quick to respond and implement a solution that was exactly what we wanted,” says Hijinio Reynoso, manager of digital media at El Camino Hospital. That solution was a message awaiting the patient on the in-room TV, explaining the seasonal visitation restrictions.

With the rapid spread of the flu bug, the hospital needed to quickly start getting word out to patients, and the Allen Technologies team delivered. “The hospital reached out to us late on a Monday night, asking us to implement automated messaging to their patients regarding new visitor restrictions,” says Dan Vrisimo, account success manager. “After conferring with our content team, we are able to launch this new information to the entire hospital by that Wednesday.”

Within 48 hours of learning of El Camino Hospital’s challenge, Allen Technologies’ digital messages were live on all 316 in-room televisions across the hospital. “We used the interactive patient system messaging as part of our overall communications efforts,” says Reynoso. “It was one of many tools we use including tent cards, messages on our website home page, social media and signage – but it is the fastest, most targeted, and easiest to implement and manage.”

“Managing visitor restriction policies is a tough task for any hospital. You can put the message out there, but enforcing it is a challenge,” notes R.J. Salus, director of patient experience. “We still struggle with the human element, but now we have the technology tool to make the marketing team’s job much easier.”



About El Camino Hospital

El Camino Hospital is an acute-care, 443-bed, nonprofit and locally governed organization with campuses in Mountain View and Los Gatos, California. Key medical specialties include behavioral health, cancer, heart and vascular, men’s health, orthopedic and spine, and the first Women’s Hospital in Northern California.

The hospital is recognized as a national leader in the use of health information technology and wireless communications, and has been awarded the Gold Seal of Approval from The Joint Commission as a Primary Stroke Center as well as back-to-back ANCC Magnet Recognitions for Nursing Care.

About Allen Technologies

Allen Technologies, the pioneer of interactive patient solutions for nearly 40 years, transforms the way hospitals engage, educate and entertain patients. Allen Technologies helps hospitals impact patient outcomes, improve patient satisfaction and achieve operational efficiencies. Allen’s multiplatform interactive patient engagement system, delivered via television, tablet and bedside monitor, is a robust patient-centric portal for customized patient education, in-room comfort control, and entertainment. Allen is the leader in interactive patient engagement solutions for smart TVs. Allen’s E3 Patient Engagement Solution integrates seamlessly with electronic medical records and system platforms including HVAC, housekeeping and food service systems. Learn more at www.engagewithallen.com, www.twitter.com/allen_IPS or www.facebook.com/allentechnologies.

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