*[Hospital Logo]*

**EMBARGOED UNTIL:**

 **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

[Hospital contact name, email, phone]

**[Hospital Name] Eliminates Restrictions on Visiting and Engages Patients and Families as Partners in Care**

**[City, State]—**[Insert hospital name] announced today that it is eliminating restrictions on visiting and welcoming patients’ families and loved ones to be with patients 24 hours a day.

“Making our patients’ families feel welcome and included in care decisions is very important to us,” said [Insert name of hospital CEO]. “The satisfaction scores we’ve seen from patients, families, and our staff show us that we need to ensure that patients and families have a positive care experience,” he/she said.

[Hospital name] joins other hospitals across the country in a national campaign, *Better Together: Partnering with Families*, spearheaded by the Institute for Patient- and Family-Centered Care in Bethesda, MD, along with several partner organizations. The campaign aims to educate hospitals about the need to change restrictive visiting policies so that families are no longer treated as “visitors” but seen as essential members of the health care team.

“We want to recognize hospitals that are takings steps to engage patients and family members as care partners,” said Beverley Johnson, President and CEO of IPFCC. “These hospitals understand how important it is to welcome families as partners instead of treating them as outsiders who are interfering in their loved one’s care,” she added.

Rather than interfering, families and loved ones can actually help improve care. Studies show that having unlimited access to family and loved ones reduces complications and strress, and improves the patient’s experience of care in the hospital. The Joint Commission, the accrediting body for health systems, recommends that hospitals accommodate access to a patient’s support person to encourage safer care.

[Hospital name] started making these changes in [year] by [feel free to describe your hospital’s process here]. These changes included addressing staff concerns about new policies, training staff, changing signage and website language to make families feel welcome, and assembling a planning team—including patient and family advisors, doctors, nurses, security personnel, receptionists, and everyone else affected—to lead the effort.

While these new policies mean families have 24/7 access, that doesn't mean there are no boundaries. “We always consider safety and patient preferences. But now having a family member or loved one by the bedside is the norm instead of the exception, in every unit of our hospital,” said [hospital CEO/representative].

[Hospital name] is also encouraging patients’ family members and loved ones to be involved in planning and decision-making and in the transitions to home. “Not only do families and loved ones provide much-needed emotional support, but they help us do our jobs better,” said [hospital CEO/representative]. “They help in the healing process and know more about the patients than we could ever know,” he/she added.

For more information on the *Better Together* campaign, visit: <http://www.ipfcc.org/bettertogether/>.