



<b>Clinical Practice Policy:</b>	Outpatient Research Appointments in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)
<b>Approval:</b>	Newborn Clinical Practice Council: <u>April 13, 2017</u>
<b>Effective Date:</b>	April 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2017

**Purpose:** To establish a process for screening and documentation of outpatient neonatal research appointments within the NICU.

**Background:** Certain research protocols in the BWH NICU may rarely require previous newborn patients to return for an outpatient follow up appointment in the NICU. These patients and their families should be screened for infectious processes prior to entry into the NICU space. These patients will be accompanied by research staff credentialed at BWH to provide the appropriate care and evaluation of the infant. This process should be transparent and communicated to all NICU staff.

**Process:**

1. At least 24 hours prior to an outpatient research visit to the NICU, the coordinating research staff will send an email to BWH NICU Charge Nurses, BWH NICU Unit Coordinators, the NICU medical director(s) and nursing director(s) with the date and time of the anticipated visit.
2. The research assistant will screen all infants and escorting parent/guardian(s) for signs or symptoms illness with standardized NICU screening questionnaires.
  - a. Screening questionnaire for infant patient (see Infection Control Guidelines, link below)
  - b. Screening questionnaire for each accompanying parent/guardian (see Infection Control Guidelines, link below)
3. In the event that there are any recent signs or symptoms of illness as answered on the screening questionnaires, the research assistant will refer these to the research nurse. Further unresolved screening issues should then be elevated to the research principal investigator (PI).
4. When the PI is involved in settling question of entry based on screening responses, the NICU medical director(s) and nursing director(s) will be involved in the decision to grant or deny entrance.
5. Record of screening will be maintained in the subject's research record.
6. Once determination that patient and accompanying adult(s) are free of infectious signs or symptoms, the research assistant will walk with the visitors directly from the NICU lobby to the site of assessment by the most direct route available.
7. A research assistant and research nurse will be available to the patient throughout the visit.
8. Once evaluation is complete, the subject and parent/guardian(s) will be escorted to the NICU lobby by the research assistant or research RN.
9. Equipment utilized during the evaluation will be cleaned per unit protocols.

**Links:**

Newborn Medicine Infection Control Guidelines:

[http://www.bwhpikenotes.org/Departments\\_Centers/NewbornMedicine\\_NICU/documents/DPNM\\_Infection\\_Control\\_Guidelines\\_2017.pdf](http://www.bwhpikenotes.org/Departments_Centers/NewbornMedicine_NICU/documents/DPNM_Infection_Control_Guidelines_2017.pdf)

Ambulatory Infection Control Guidelines:

[http://www.bwhpikenotes.org/policies/InfectionControl/policies\\_procedures\\_plans/Ambulatory\\_Guidelines\\_Infection\\_Control.docx](http://www.bwhpikenotes.org/policies/InfectionControl/policies_procedures_plans/Ambulatory_Guidelines_Infection_Control.docx)

Reviewed by: Terri Gorman and Michael Prendergast, Medical Directors  
Suzanne Fernandes, Nursing Director  
Clinical Practice Council 4/13/17