

COVID's Impact on Hospice Strategies to Combat and Maintain Quality Care

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INTRODUCTION

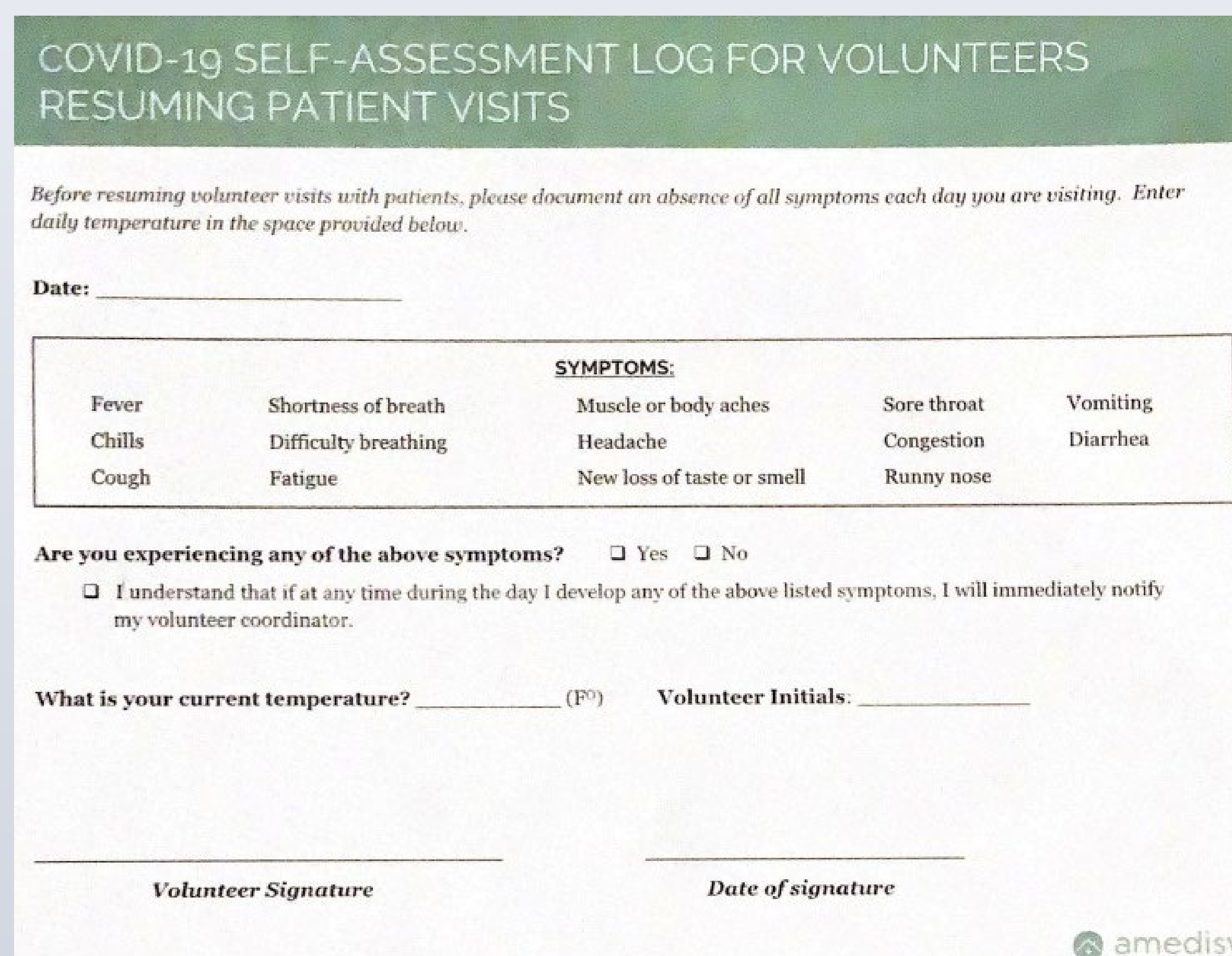
- Amedisys is a leading provider in healthcare, with services ranging from Home Health Care to Hospice Care, Personal Care, and Palliative Care. They have a vision of serving those with compassionate services that apply the highest quality of clinical practice (Amedisys, 2022).
- Their core values include service, passion, integrity, respect, innovation, & talent, combined with their mission to become the premier choice for care. Regardless of where clients call home, they strive to provide excellence and efficiency in all aspects (Amedisys, 2022).
- Every client receives the best standard of care, no matter where they are on their journey. Hospice care services include physical, emotional, and spiritual care at the end of life and support for loved ones (Amedisys, 2022).
- Hospice does not mean relinquishing life. Instead, the goals are to provide comfort and improve the quality of life. The misconceptions act as barriers that prohibit the understanding and utilization of the services (Amedisys, 2022).

RELATED LITERATURE

- The coronavirus did not care about anyone. It dehumanized the dying process. The weekly visits were put to an end, which meant their bond would be put on pause. When volunteers re-entered for visits, they saw how the absence took a toll on their assigned clients (Dickerson, 2021).
- Hospice services are underutilized by both clinicians and respective clients due to misconceptions. Despite the increase in admissions, the understanding of the practice and the potential benefits are unknown by many who could possibly benefit. Many services are offered that help the client, family, and caregivers. One provider added, "Just because you're putting them on hospice does not mean you're killing them." (Tate et al., 2020).
- Volunteers are a vital part of the hospice team. Allowing them to conduct in-person visits is vital to the client. Ensuring both parties are protected is imperative too. Agencies saw how valuable the volunteers were when they were no longer able to perform what they used to. Allowing the visits improve the client's quality of life (Walshe et al., 2022).

MATERIALS & METHODS

- Prior to each visit, a symptom sheet was completed to ensure the volunteer was healthy and symptom-free.
- After completing a post-visitation sheet.
 - Including a description of the time together, the total amount of time, and any personality changes
- To enhance the post-visitation log, 2 more sections were added.
 - A space for comparison to detail the last visit and the most recent one (help to track a decline or improvement)
 - A space for the volunteer to reflect



COVID-19 SELF-ASSESSMENT LOG FOR VOLUNTEERS RESUMING PATIENT VISITS

Before resuming volunteer visits with patients, please document an absence of all symptoms each day you are visiting. Enter daily temperature in the space provided below.

Date: _____

SYMPTOMS:				
Fever	Shortness of breath	Muscle or body aches	Sore throat	Vomiting
Chills	Difficulty breathing	Headache	Congestion	Diarrhea
Cough	Fatigue	New loss of taste or smell	Runny nose	

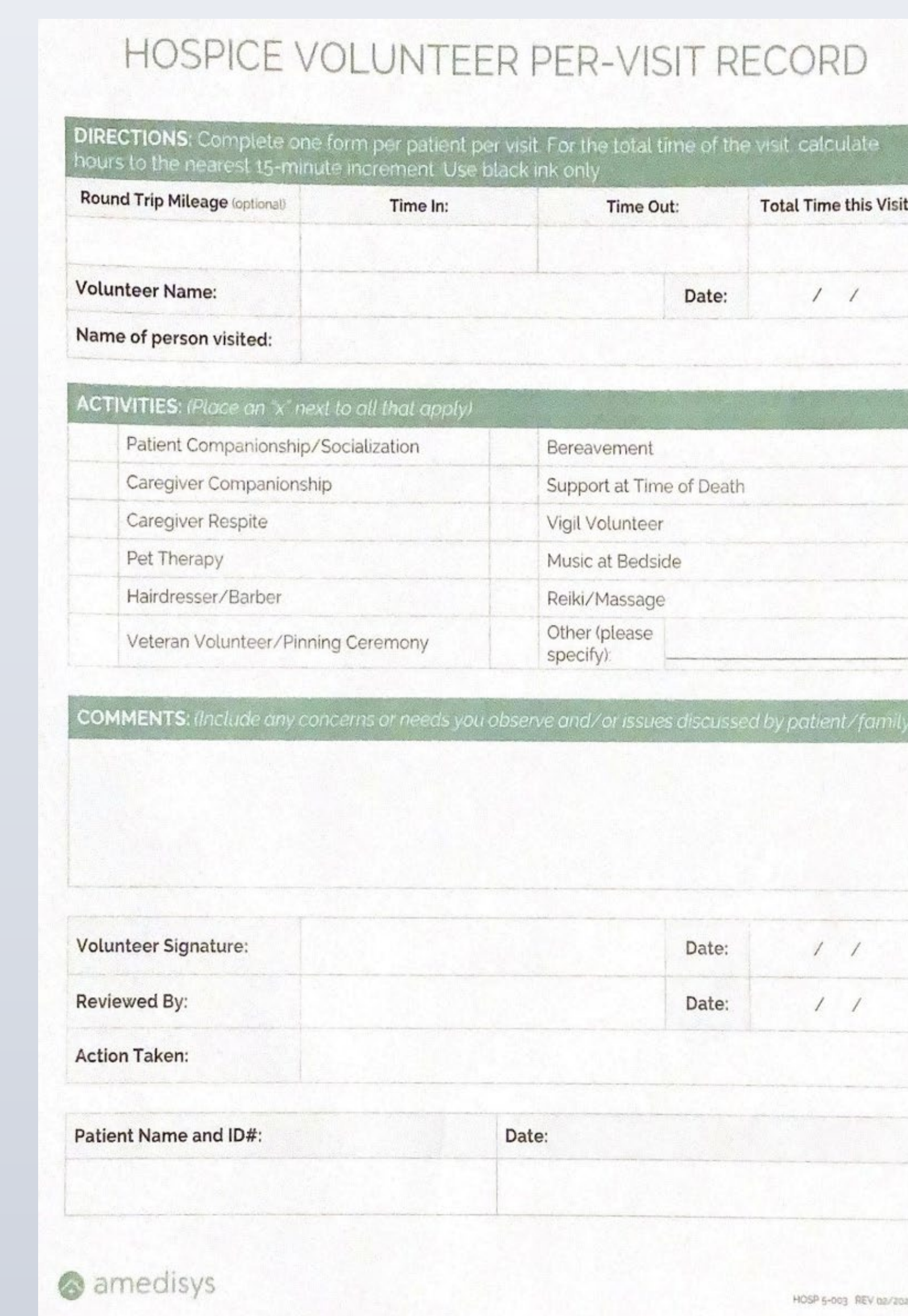
Are you experiencing any of the above symptoms? Yes No

I understand that if at any time during the day I develop any of the above listed symptoms, I will immediately notify my volunteer coordinator.

What is your current temperature? _____ (°F) Volunteer Initials: _____

Volunteer Signature Date of signature

Daily symptom sheet used prior to each visit. After, they would be stored in volunteer records.



HOSPICE VOLUNTEER PER-VISIT RECORD

DIRECTIONS: Complete one form per patient per visit. For the total time of the visit, calculate hours to the nearest 15-minute increment. Use black ink only.

Round Trip Mileage (optional)	Time In:	Time Out:	Total Time this Visit:

Volunteer Name: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Name of person visited: _____

ACTIVITIES: (Place an "X" next to all that apply)

Patient Companionship/Socialization	Bereavement
Caregiver Companionship	Support at Time of Death
Caregiver Respite	Vigil Volunteer
Pet Therapy	Music at Bedside
Hairdresser/Barber	Reiki/Massage
Veteran Volunteer/Pinning Ceremony	Other (please specify): _____

COMMENTS: (Include any concerns or needs you observe and/or issues discussed by patient/family)

Volunteer Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Reviewed By: _____ Date: ____/____/____

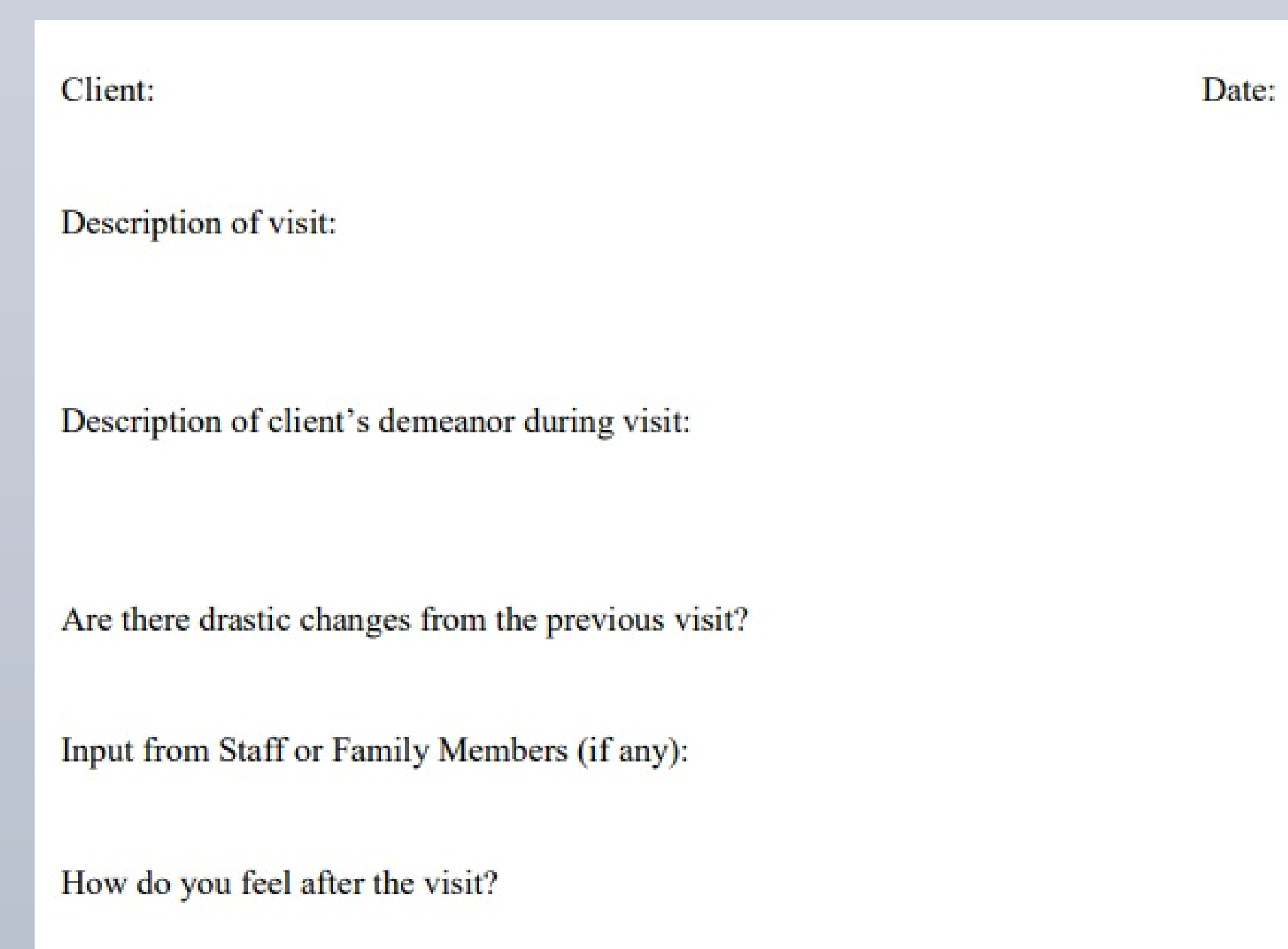
Action Taken: _____

Patient Name and ID#: _____ Date: _____

The post-visitation sheet was completed after visits. Includes the type of activity performed and any comments the volunteer feels are important.

RESULTS

- Created an additional sheet to be utilized by volunteers that incorporates some missing aspects.
 - Including space for comparison of most recent visits and a space to reflect emotionally and mentally.
- Compared the previous and most recent visits to help chronicle any major developments or declines of the client.
- A third space incorporated input from family members or facility staff.
 - The family members (if present) could relay any concerns, which would then be passed on to their care team. Staff members can provide any updates and insights.



Client: _____ Date: _____

Description of visit: _____

Description of client's demeanor during visit: _____

Are there drastic changes from the previous visit? _____

Input from Staff or Family Members (if any): _____

How do you feel after the visit? _____

The post-visitation sheet I created includes aspects I felt were missing from the original sheet. Updates include a comparison of recent visits, reflection on mental health, and input from the family or staff.

CONCLUSIONS

- This project aimed to dive deeper into the protocols utilized by Beacon Hospice to combat the virus while still maintaining a high quality of care for the patients and protecting their volunteers. I could experience firsthand how their protocols played out by conducting in-person visits. I found the per-visit records helpful when recounting how each visit went for each client. It is important to always document what is done, especially in the medical field, to ensure the highest quality of care is always being performed for the patient's safety.
- Being able to learn about the different parts of hospice care and how other disciplines interact and work together as a part of the client's hospice team was eye-opening. This experience has taught me that every client's journey at the end of life is unique to them. I am grateful I was allowed to spend time with the clients who welcomed me into their hearts.
- Helping with the administrative duties in the office taught me how large the corporation is. I used to think the office work played a small part, but after experiencing the office for myself, I saw that the work is equally important as hands-on care.

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