


## TRL Systems, Inc.

Achoo! Tech Tools to Keep the Flu  
Out of Your Hospital This Season

INFECTION CONTROL Temporary Visiting Restrictions Policy	CONTROL DE LAS INFECCIONES Política temporal sobre las restricciones de las visitas	
<p><b>To reduce the risk of influenza to our patients, visitors and staff:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Please do not visit if you have any flu-like symptoms</li><li>• Please no visitors under age 16</li><li>• Cleanse your hands frequently</li></ul> <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><b>Para disminuir el riesgo de gripe para nuestros pacientes, visitantes y miembros del personal:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evite las visitas si tiene algún síntoma seudogripal.</li><li>• No se permite el ingreso de los visitantes menores de 16 años.</li><li>• Lávese bien las manos con frecuencia.</li></ul> <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>	

It's beginning to look a lot like ... flu season. California traditionally experiences some of the highest volumes of influenza outbreaks in the country, and the 2016-17 season is shaping up to be no different.

Flu season officially began Oct. 1, and peaks around February. But the state's first flu-related fatality was reported on Dec. 1, in Los Angeles County. At the same time, the California Department of Public Health already had reported 11 confirmed flu-related cases requiring treatment in an intensive care unit. In early January, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention included California in a list of eight states already reporting widespread influenza outbreaks.

For hospitals, managing the spread of flu can be especially challenging. "Hospital patients are usually ill, weak or elderly, and are likely to be immunocompromised," said John Pina, Healthcare Project Manager with TRL Systems, who recently led infection control training for TRL's Healthcare Division. "In addition, some hospital patients may be taking drugs that lower their immune system."

Controlling the spread of influenza requires a multi-pronged infection control strategy. If this season is similar to those in the past, among those precautions likely to be implemented around the state will be temporary visitation restrictions.

While visitor restrictions are an effective way to keep the flu out of the hospital, communicating the policy to patients, visitors and staff can be resource-intensive and time consuming. "In the past, hospitals would rely on signage posted around the facility and messages on their websites and social media," noted Sy Granillo, Lead Account Executive in TRL's Healthcare Division. "Those signs had to be created, printed, taken around to hospital rooms and waiting areas – all steps that take time and people to carry out."

Increasingly, hospitals are turning to interactive patient engagement tools to manage pandemics like influenza through the use of site-wide notification. During the 2015 flu season, for example, El Camino Hospital in Mountain View and Los Gatos turned to Allen Technologies to implement automated digital messaging on its 316 patient-room televisions throughout the hospital. "The messages were up and running within 48 hours of notifying Allen of the need," said Granillo. "It is a great example of how technology can supplement traditional approaches to deliver fast, targeted solutions that minimize staff resources to implement and manage."

Site-wide notifications can be used for an array of other hospital communication needs, as well. Some hospitals are using Allen's interactive capability to push out emergency weather alerts across the hospital campus. Others rely on it to let patients and visitors know about upcoming events, construction updates, special holiday menu offers and more. Messages can be targeted across the hospital, or to specific units.

Learn more in this [case study](#), or [contact us](#) for an on-site demonstration of how site-wide notification works.