

The role of the Family/Ward Coordinator on an Alliance for Smiles medical mission is to transfer the patient from the pediatric ward to the surgical area and back, to keep the child's mind off the upcoming surgery, and to make sure the family is engaged and involved in the process. It is also expected that the coordinator will collect and share patient stories and photos (make sure to include the patient's name and record number). Optionally, thank you messages written by parents, children, and hospital staff, as well as pictures made by the children, can be collected.

**The main responsibilities of the family/ward coordinator are:**

- 1) Upon the patient entering the surgical area, give them a surgical gown. Instruct them to take off all their clothing except for their underwear and socks. To ensure the patient's privacy, especially with older patients, they should do this in a private area.
- 2) Anyone accompanying the patient should be given a surgical mask, cap, and shoe covers.
- 3) Perform a check of the chart to ensure that the patient's ID band matches the number on the chart. Also make sure the patient's weight is noted. If the weight is not included, escort the patient to a place where it can be taken.
- 4) Before the patient receives an IV, escort them to the bathroom. This eliminates any accidents during surgery.
- 5) Take the patient's mind off the impending surgery, especially younger children. A patient who is relaxed makes the surgical team's job easier. Use your imagination to keep the patient amused. If one technique doesn't work, try another. Remember nothing is too stupid or corny if it takes the patient's mind off the impending operation. You can bring supplies with you that are useful to help you accomplish this goal such as:
  - Crayons or water-based paints, along with paper or coloring books
  - Bubbles
  - Simple games and puzzles
  - Musical instruments
  - Books or magazines for a variety of ages
  - Pictures from home of pets or family members
- 6) Try to engage the family as much as possible. Let them know that after the surgery doctors and/or nurses will inform them about issues such as feeding/eating issues, surgery recovery time, oral hygiene, etc. You can also train the parents to assemble arm restraints (no –no's) to be worn by their children after surgery to prevent them from interfering with surgical stitches. (Someone who has been on a previous mission can teach you how to make them.)
- 7) Document human-interest stories about the patients and families. AfS will send copies of a **Family Story Questionnaire** (see next page) to collect these stories. You can work with the photographer, translators, and other volunteers on this task. Make sure to include the patient's name and record number for future reference. Please send the stories to the AfS office either during or after the mission.
- 8) You can also ask the patients to draw pictures and write thank you notes. If the patients aren't old enough, ask the families to write notes. Again, note the patient's name and record number.
- 9) Be flexible, and open to helping other members of the team. If you have a spare moment, ask someone if they need help. And have fun!

Copies of the below *Family Story Questionnaire* are sent on all missions. Use this form to capture stories for each family.

### *Family Story Questionnaire*

**Patient ID #** \_\_\_\_\_

What is your child's name?

How long was your journey here?

How did you learn about the mission? Social media, church, friends, television, radio, other?

Please tell us about your family & home, for example: number of family members, jobs, homelife, etc.

Why did you decide to get surgery for your child? What issues did your child experience because of their cleft?

Do you use WhatsApp and/or Facebook, and would you like to share your ID with us?

Would you like us to contact you in 6 months to follow up on how your child is doing?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Can we share your child's story with our donors?

Yes ☐ ☐

How do you hope your child's life will change after the surgery?

Do you have any other information or stories you would like to share with us?