



## QUICK REFERENCE FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS INTERACTING WITH BAHÁ'Í PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

For more complete information on interacting with Bahá'í patients, please see the complete version of the *Guidelines for Health Care Providers Interacting with Bahá'í Patients and Their Families*. This *Quick Reference* is meant to assist Health Care Workers in Emergency Situations.

<b>GENERAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Bahá'í Faith is the youngest of the world's independent religions. Its founder, Bahá'u'lláh (1817-1892), is regarded by Bahá'ís as the most recent in the line of Messengers of God that stretches back beyond recorded time and that includes Abraham, Moses, Buddha, Zoroaster, Christ and Muhammad. The Bahá'í Faith is recognized as being the second most widespread religion in the world next to Christianity. The Bahá'í membership in the United States reflects the racial and cultural diversity of the American population.</li> <li>▪ The central theme of Bahá'u'lláh's message is that humanity is one single race and that the day has come for its unification in one global society. The principal challenge facing the peoples of the earth is to accept the fact of their oneness and to assist the processes of unification.</li> <li>▪ There is no clergy in the Bahá'í Faith and elected bodies known as local Spiritual Assemblies administer the affairs of the community.</li> <li>▪ Bahá'ís pray daily and believe sickness can be healed both through the use of medicine and the use of prayer. As there is no clergy in the Bahá'í Faith, the believers are free to pray and consult about making medical decisions according to the Bahá'í teachings.</li> </ul>
<b>GENDER ISSUES/ BODY EXPOSURE</b>	Whether it is preferable that a same-sex doctor be assigned to a Bahá'í is entirely a matter of personal choice.
<b>BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS</b>	Blood transfusions are allowed.
<b>DIETARY ISSUES</b>	There are no dietary restrictions for Bahá'ís. During the Fasting period (March 20 <sup>th</sup> – 21 <sup>st</sup> ), Bahá'ís between the ages of 15 to 70 years old do not eat or drink between dawn and sunset, except in the case of pregnancy, travel or ill health.
<b>END OF LIFE CARE</b>	The decision to remove or withhold life support in medical cases where intervention prolongs life in disabling illness must be left to those responsible, notably the patient/surrogate and the physician.
<b>ORGAN DONATION/RECIPT OF TISSUE OR ORGANS</b>	Bahá'ís can receive and donate organs.
<b>AUTOPSY</b>	Autopsies are permitted.
<b>CARE OF THE DECEASED</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The body of the departed should be treated with honor and respect, and the family or local governing body of the Bahá'í should be contacted. There are no formal last rites for Bahá'ís. However, prayers may be offered by family, friends, or hospital clergy.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Since Bahá'ís believe that the soul is present from conception, the embryo/fetus should be treated with respect regardless how young it is. The burial of embryos/fetuses should be left to the discretion of the parents whenever possible. It should not be incinerated if this can be prevented.</li> <li>▪ If the death is subject to investigation by the local Medical Examiner or Coroner, follow established procedures. Be sure to notify the Medical Examiner or Coroner of any special religious beliefs or family requests.</li> </ul>
<b>RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES</b>	<p>Bahá'ís may wish to have symbols such as a picture of a nine-pointed star present in their hospital room. It should be placed in a position of respect. Other objects may include a photograph of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, son of the Prophet Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, a prayer book, or other books containing Bahá'í Writings. No special room is needed for prayers.</p>
<b>CONTACT INFORMATION &amp; RESOURCES ON THE WEB</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, 202/466-9870</li> <li>▪ Health for Humanity, 847/835-5088</li> <li>▪ Official website of the Bahá'ís of the United States, <a href="http://www.us.Bahai.org">www.us.Bahai.org</a></li> <li>▪ Official website of the worldwide Bahá'í community, <a href="http://www.Bahai.org">www.Bahai.org</a></li> </ul>