

POLICY

TITLE: Visitation Policy for Patient Care Areas

EFFECTIVE DATE: May 2022

OWNER OF THIS DOCUMENT: VP, Chief Nursing Officer

SCOPE: This document applies to Baptist, Gulf Breeze, and Jay Hospital Patient Care Areas.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: To establish visitation direction to ensure an environment that provides for the security and well-being of patients, Visitors, and Workforce Members.

DEFINITIONS:

Immediate Family: Includes father, mother, parent's spouse, child (by blood, adoption, or marriage), brother, sister, spouse, grandparent, and grandchild.

Isolation: The implementation of transmission-based precautions (contact, droplet, respiratory, airborne) to separate sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick and to communicate the recommended personal protective equipment.

Patient Care Area: Areas or departments of a Baptist Health Care (BHC) hospital or facility where patients are receiving inpatient care and treatment. This does not include surgery, where Visitors are never allowed.

Patient Representative: The person designated by the patient to make or communicate healthcare decisions on the patient's behalf.

Personal Protective Equipment ("PPE"): Equipment worn to minimize exposure to sources of illness or injury. Examples include gloves, gowns, goggles, face shields, respirators, and masks.

Team Members: Full, part time, and PRN employees of BHC.

Visitor: Any person whom the patient requests to be present with them.

Workforce Members: Team Members, members of BHC subsidiaries' medical staffs and allied health staffs (whether employed or independent), volunteers, students, and any employees or agents of independent contractors of BHC or its subsidiaries who are carrying out BHC business operations on BHC's behalf under the general direction of a Team Member.

POLICY:

1. BHC shall respect applicable patient visitation rights while providing the security and well-being of patients, visitors, and Workforce Members. The following patient rights shall govern application of this policy:
 - a. Patient visitation rights. Patients have the right to:
 - i. Be informed of their visitation rights, including any clinical restrictions or limitations on such rights.
 - ii. Receive Visitors of their designation, subject to their consent, including, but not limited to, a spouse, a domestic partner, their chosen Patient Representative, another family member, or a friend who may visit the patient for at least two (2) hours each day while the patient is in a Patient Care Area.
 - iii. Withdraw or deny consent to Visitors, at any time.
 - iv. Have no restrictions, limitations or otherwise denial of visitation privileges based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability.
 - v. Ensure that all non-family Visitors designated by the patient (or Patient Representative, where appropriate) enjoy visitation privileges that are no more restrictive than those that Immediate Family members would enjoy.
2. The number of Visitors in a patient room should generally not exceed two at a time, except in extenuating circumstances at the discretion of the patient care team. Only one Visitor at a time is allowed in rooms of patients who are positive for COVID-19 or who are waiting for COVID-19 test results unless exceptions have been made for extenuating circumstances or such visitation is permitted pursuant to paragraph 9 below.
3. Visitors must comply with all applicable infection prevention measures established by BHC including but not limited to:
 - a. Not visiting if the Visitor is sick. Visitors must be free from fever, cold, sore throat, upper respiratory infection or other illness;
 - b. Handwashing and sanitation protocols; and
 - c. Isolation or PPE protocols.
4. Because patient care must remain the priority, upon request by a Workforce Member, Visitors shall promptly and quietly leave the Patient Care Area. This may be necessary while personal care or emergency care is being provided, when private conversations between patient and caregivers are necessary, when invasive procedures are being performed, or when the patient requires uninterrupted rest time.
5. Visitors must be dressed appropriately, which shall include shirt and shoes.
6. Visitors must conduct themselves in an appropriate manner to ensure patients are not disturbed and that patient privacy is protected. If a Visitor's behavior is inappropriate or violates this policy, the Visitor(s) may be asked by a Workforce Member or BHC security officer to leave the facility.

7. Minors should not routinely be Visitors in Patient Care Areas, but may be permitted in limited circumstances as permitted by the patient care team. Minors under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult at all times. Children who are visiting cannot have been exposed to chicken pox, measles, rubella or mumps within the past three weeks.
8. Visitors are responsible for keeping their valuables secure. BHC facilities are not responsible for any lost or stolen items.
 - a. Personal bedding such as mattresses and sleeping bags, etc., are not allowed in waiting rooms.
 - b. Electrical appliances such as crock pots, toasters, toaster ovens, hair dryers are not allowed to be brought into any BHC facility.
9. Visitation for patients in Isolation:
 - a. Patients in Isolation will not be permitted to have any Visitors except for the extenuating circumstances listed in Section 10 of this policy.
 - b. When permitted, Visitors will be required to adhere to PPE requirements in a safe manner. Visitors to Isolation patients will be provided information explaining the appropriate use of PPE, acknowledging the risks of visitation of Isolation patients, and setting forth the expectations of Visitors under these circumstances.
 - c. Visitors will be limited to Immediate Family unless:
 - i. The patient can communicate his/her preference for Visitors, in which case the patient's preference shall be honored.
 - ii. The patient is not known to have family, in which case close friends may be permitted.
 - d. Visitors under 16 years of age will not be permitted to visit patients in Isolation except in exceptional circumstances, such as the minor child is the only family. Minor Visitors will only be permitted pursuant to the exception process below.
 - e. No Visitors may be present in the patient room during any aerosol generating procedure (e.g., intubation, extubation, CPR) and for at least 60 minutes after the conclusion of the aerosol generating procedure. Any questions about whether a procedure is considered aerosol generating will be decided by the attending physician.
 - f. When appropriate and taking into account all actual and potential risk to patients, Visitors and Workforce Members, end of life patients may be transferred out of the existing patient room to a more remote and safer room for visitation.
 - g. BHC strives to provide consistent, fair, and clear visitation policies but acknowledges that patient circumstances vary and that compassion for patients may call for exceptions to this policy on a case-by-case basis. Exceptions to this policy may only be made in extraordinary circumstances in collaboration with the chief nursing officer, chief medical officer, or designee upon consultation with nursing and/or medical staff leadership and other stakeholders as appropriate.
 - h. The chief medical officer or the chief nursing officer have the right to prohibit all

visitation if the crisis standards of care are activated and/or other extenuating circumstances are present.

10. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary herein, a Visitor is permitted in-person visitation to all Patient Care Areas under all of the following circumstances, unless the patient objects:
- a. End-of-life situations.
 - b. A patient who was living with family before being admitted to the BHC facility is struggling with the change in environment and lack of in-person family support.
 - c. A patient is making one or more major medical decisions.
 - d. A patient is experiencing emotional distress or grieving the loss of a friend or family member who recently died.
 - e. A patient needs cueing or encouragement to eat or drink which was previously provided by a family member or caregiver.
 - f. A patient who used to talk and interact with others is seldom speaking.
 - g. Childbirth, including labor and delivery.
 - h. Pediatric patients.
11. The Baptist Hospital Chief Nursing Officer will be responsible for ensuring that Workforce Members adhere to the provisions of this policy.

RELATED POLICIES/PROCEDURES

Pastoral Services

Patient Bill of Rights

REFERENCES/SOURCES:

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Condition of Participation CFR 482.13(h)
Patient Visitation Rights.

Florida Patient's Bill of Rights and Responsibilities (Fla. Stat. §381.026)

No Patient Left Alone Act (Fla Stat. §408.823)

NIAHO Accreditation Requirements, Interpretive Guidelines and Surveyor Guidance
Revision 18-1, PR.2 SR.12

Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel
During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

RESCISSION: Visitation Guidance for Patient Care Areas, effective July 2020, is hereby rescinded.