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Quality  
Area Patient Rights  
Applicability System-Wide

## Visitation Guidelines

Version: 3

### Policy Title: Visitation Guidelines

### Purpose:

To define the patient's right to visitation while receiving care, treatment, and service.

### Scope:

This is an organization-wide policy.

### Policy:

The patient has the right to visitation while under the care, treatment, and service of the Hospital. The Hospital shall not restrict, limit, or otherwise deny visitation privileges on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. Visitors shall enjoy full and equal visitation privileges consistent with patient preferences.

Visitors may be limited or restricted when visitation would interfere with the care of the patient and/or the care of other patients. Circumstances reasonably related to the care of the patient and/or the care of other patients that provide a basis to impose restrictions or limitations on visitors include (but are not limited to) when:

- Infection control issues;
- Visitation may interfere with the care of other patients;

- A court order restricting a visitor from contact with a patient;
- Visitors engage in disruptive, threatening, or violent behavior;
- The patient or patient's roommate(s) requires rest or privacy;
- An inpatient substance abuse treatment program limiting visitation;
- The patient is undergoing care interventions;
- Visitation is otherwise clinically contraindicated

Children under 12 years of age shall not be admitted as visitors except in the company of a responsible adult.

The organization may limit the number of visitors for any one patient during a specific period of time, as well as establish minimum age requirements for child visitors when reasonably necessary to provide safe care.

The patient shall be informed of the reason for any restriction or limitation of visitors.

## Procedure:

### A. Limiting Visitation

1. The number of visitors and length of visitation may be limited due to the critical nature of a patient's illness and the level of required medical care.
2. Visitation is not permitted during the performance of any invasive or other high-risk procedures.
3. Visitation is generally not permitted when a patient is receiving personal care such as toileting, bathing, etc.
4. The patient requests that visitors be restricted.
5. Restriction is necessary to assure the safety of the patient.

### B. Designating a Support Person for Visitation

1. A patient has the right to designate a support person for visitation. A patient's "support person" does not necessarily have to be the same person as the patient's representative who is legally responsible for making medical decisions on the patient's behalf. A support person could be a spouse, a domestic partner (including a same-sex domestic partner), family member, friend, or other individual who supports the patient during the course of care, treatment, or service.
2. The support person may exercise a patient's visitation rights on behalf of the patient with respect to other visitors when the patient is unable to do so.
3. The Hospital shall accept a patient's designated support person orally or in writing.
4. When a patient is incapacitated or otherwise unable to communicate his or her wishes and an advance directive is presented, the organization will accept the patient representative, provide the required notice of the patient's visitation rights, and allow the individual to exercise the patient's visitation rights on the patient's behalf.

5. When a patient is incapacitated or unable to communicate his or her wishes for visitation, does not have an advance directive on file, and an individual asserts that he or she is the patient's spouse, a domestic partner (including a same-sex partner), parent or other family member, as the patient's support person, the organization shall accept this assertion, without demanding supporting documentation. A copy of the visitation rights will be provided, and the individual will be allowed to exercise the patient's visitation rights. If more than one individual claims to be the patient's support person, the organization may ask for documentation from all parties to support their claim.

#### C. Informing the Patient/ Support Person of Their Right to Visitation

1. The Hospital shall inform patient, the support person, and the representative of the patient's visitation rights. This information will be provided in writing upon admission.
2. The written notice shall address any clinically necessary or reasonable limitations or restrictions imposed by Hospital policy on visitation rights.
3. The notice must include the patient's right to:
  - Consent to receive visitors he or she has designated, either orally or in writing, including but not limited to, a spouse, a domestic partner (including a same-sex domestic partner), another family member, or a friend.
  - Withdraw or deny his/her consent to receive specific visitors at any time, either orally or in writing during the hospitalization period.
4. The medical record must contain documentation that the written notice was provided to the patient or, if appropriate, the patient's support person or representative.

#### D. Resolving Disputes Regarding Visitation

All questions or disagreements surrounding visitation shall be resolved as follows:

- If the patient is able, the patient shall decide who may visit.
- If the patient is unable, the patient's designated support person or representative will decide who may visit.
- In the event that a patient has both a representative and a support person who are not the same individual, and they disagree on who should be allowed to visit the patient, the organization shall defer to the decisions of the patient's representative.
- If none of the above options present themselves, the organization shall determine who may visit based on a good faith understanding of the patient's likely wishes.

#### E. TRAINING OF STAFF

Staff that play a role in facilitating or controlling visitors shall be trained to assure appropriate implementation of this policy and on the avoidance of unnecessary restrictions or limitations on the patient's right to receive visitors. Training shall be provided as part of new-hire orientation.

# Related Policies and Forms:

*Patient Right to Notify Others of an Inpatient Admission, Patient Rights and Responsibilities*

## Keywords:

*Visitation, Patient Rights*

## References:

CMS Conditions of Participation for Acute Care Hospitals, §482.13(h)  
Center for Improvement in Healthcare Quality, Standard PR-12  
HFAP, Standard 15.01.25

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## Applicability

Cincinnati Rehabilitation Hospital, Florida Rehabilitation Hospital at Tampa, Indianapolis Rehabilitation Hospital, Johnson County Rehabilitation Hospital, Milwaukee Rehabilitation Hospital at Greenfield, Nobis Rehabilitation Partners, Oklahoma City Rehabilitation Hospital, Orlando Rehabilitation Hospital, Reunion Rehabilitation Hospital Arlington, Reunion Rehabilitation Hospital Denver, Reunion Rehabilitation Hospital Inverness, Reunion Rehabilitation Hospital Jacksonville, Reunion Rehabilitation Hospital Peoria, Reunion Rehabilitation Hospital Phoenix, Reunion Rehabilitation Hospital Plano, San Antonio Rehabilitation Hospital, Shreveport Rehabilitation Hospital, Tulsa Rehabilitation Hospital

## Standards

No standards are associated with this document