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| Policy Title: Visitation Policy | | |
| Department: Administrative | | TJC Chapter(s): Rights and Responsibilities of the Individual |
| Title of Policy Owner: Chief Operating Officer | | Approved by: Administration & Legal Departments |
| Effective Date: 10/1/2020 | Reviewed Date: 9/2021 | Revised Date: 5/2022 |

I. PURPOSE:

Consistent with our mission and Cornerstone values, Halifax Health promotes and supports a patient-centered care model that includes the presence and participation of family and/or other support person(s) as designated by the patient. This policy serves to define and set expectations regarding hospital visitation that promote healing and a therapeutic environment, meeting the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the patients we serve.

II. SCOPE:

This policy applies to all patient care areas/departments within any entity or facility owned by Halifax Health

III. DEFINITIONS:

Support person: an individual who is in a support role for a patient or who is legally responsible for making health care decisions on behalf of a patient. This may include family members, friends, or another individual who is there to support the patient. These individuals should be seen as integral to healing and essential to the delivery of care, supporting transitions of care, decision-making and as stewards of patient safety.

Family: any individual who plays a significant role in the patient’s life, such as spouse, domestic partners, significant others and other individuals not legally related to the patient.

IV. POLICY:

Patient Rights Surrounding Visitation:

Patients have the right to consent to receive visitors he/she has designated, either orally or in writing, including but not limited to, a spouse, a domestic partner (including same-sex domestic partner), another family member or a friend. Similarly, patients also have the right to withdraw or deny his/her consent to receive specific visitors, or to impose visitation limitations for some visitors. Notice of these rights, including any clinical restriction or limitation on visitation, will be provided upon admission.

When an individual is incapacitated or otherwise unable to communicate his/her wishes regarding visitation and an advanced directive is accessible designating another individual as their support person, the required notice of patient’s visitation rights should be supplied to the support person. The support person would then be allowed to exercise the patient’s visitation rights on the patient’s behalf.

General Visitation Policies:

General visiting hours are 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Due to the critical or sensitive nature of some units (critical care, emergency department, behavioral health services, etc.), visiting hours may be more restrictive. See department specific sections of this policy.

The number of visitors allowed per patient will be limited to two visitors at a time, subject to any restrictions as discussed below. However, at a minimum, a patient may designate a visitor, who is a family member, friend, guardian, or other individual, as an essential caregiver, and visitation is allowed by such essential caregiver for a least two (2) hours daily.

- Maintain the privacy of all patients.
- Minimize disturbances to patients by not congregating outside in the hallways.
- Abide by conduct supportive of the hospital environment. Visitors may be asked to leave if they become disruptive or interfere with the general comfort and care of the patients.
- Not interfere with normal hospital operations.
- Refrain from smoking anywhere on hospital campuses.
- Not be in possession of any weapons or illegal substances while visiting.
- Not utilize cell phones to videotape or take photos (see policy titled "Privacy: Photographic, Radiographic, Other Image, Audio and Video Recording).

In-person visitation of a specific visitor may be suspended if the visitor violates this Visitor Policy or any related policies and procedures.

Department/Unit Specific Visitation Policies:

Labor & Delivery and Mother/Baby:

- During labor and delivery up to maximum of 3 visitors (including the support person) are allowed.
- Only one support person will be allowed in the Operating Room during a C-section.
- Siblings of the newborn will be allowed to visit during normal visiting hours but must be accompanied by an adult.

Neonatal ICU / Nursery:

- Before entering the Neonatal ICU, unit clerk will notify the nurse of the parent's/visitor's arrival.
- Parents/visitors must wash their hands for 2 minutes prior to entering the patient care area. Any jewelry, watches, etc. should be removed and arms should be bare below the elbow.
- Parents may visit their baby day or night. Parents are encouraged to visit often, especially at feeding times. There may be exceptions in certain situations when parents may be asked wait outside the Neonatal ICU or relocate to another area within the unit during critical situations with other babies.
- Only two visitors will be allowed at the baby's bedside at one time. One of the visitors must have a Hollister band in place.
- Siblings may visit if current with their immunizations and if cold/flu symptom free. A copy of their current shot record must be supplied to the NICU prior to their first visit. Siblings must be under constant supervision by the family.
- Individuals with open sores should check with a nurse or physician prior to entering the Neonatal ICU area.
- Patients/visitors entering Neonatal ICU/Nursery with a known history of MDRO should be evaluated further to determine if colonized or active infection is present. The nurse should contact Infection Prevention & Control for guidance.

Maternal Fever

- Hospitalized postpartum women who develop fevers related to obstetric conditions may enter the nursery and care for their newborns if:
 - a. The fever is not due to a communicable disease that is likely to be transmitted to the infant (Such as postpartum hemorrhage related fever, drug fever, etc.). This determination has to be made by the attending physician(s) treating patient and the infection control department.
 - b. If it is determined safe for the mother to visit the baby, the mother practices a thorough 3 minute scrub with Hibiclens solution.
- Postpartum mothers infected with non-obstetric related communicable disease (such as C. diff, multi-drug resistant organisms MDRO) should be treated according to the precautions and isolation techniques required by the communicable disease. Contact with the baby will be restricted if there is a risk that the infant will be infected (example: active Herpes lesions on the mother).
- Women with abscesses or infected or drained wounds should have appropriate cover dressings that cover and contain drainage adequately and should be limited to their room where appropriate isolation precautions need to be followed.
- Mother may sometimes be placed in isolation based on the suspected or confirmed disease or Multidrug resistant organisms (MDRO). The mother may also be restricted to the room they are placed in the postpartum period and not allowed to visit the baby in the nursery in certain circumstances. Regarding management of the mother, please refer to Precautions: Transmission-Based Specific Disease Precautions/Isolation in the Infection Prevention & Control Manual.

Halifax Health Behavioral Services:

- Visiting hours:
Monday – Friday: 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, Sunday and holidays: 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
4 East: as above with additional hour from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Monday – Friday
- All visitors to Behavioral Services will read and sign a confidentiality statement.
- All visitors must secure all personal items prior to entering. Cell phones, computers, briefcase or purses are not permitted on the inpatient unit. Visitors may utilize lockers provided for storage of these items.
- The dayroom and therapy room on the unit(s) may be used for visitation. Unit staff on 2600 and 2700 (no less than 2 staff) will supervise all visitation and report to the RN the results of visit related to patient/visitor interaction.
- Patients may have members of the clergy or their own private attorney visit any time during 9:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. following the same guidelines as outlined in this policy. Anything outside of this policy requires a physician order.
- Former patients are allowed to visit current patients, unless the attending physician thinks such visitation would be detrimental to the current patient's condition.
- Visitation outside of regular visiting hours must have permission from the attending provider, psychiatric counselor and/or the charge nurse/nurse manager.
- Visitors who bring items in for patients must leave those items at the reception desk. Staff will inventory items and if allowed/appropriate will disperse to the patient.
- A patient on 24-hour room restriction may visit with family in designated areas.
- Parents/guardians may visit the Day Treatment Program at any time. Parent/guardian must check in at the office upon arrival and obtain a visitor's ID badge. If the parent/guardian wishes to visit a specific activity they must obtain approval from the staff person in charge of that activity.

Radiology:

In radiology procedure areas (inpatient and ROPU) visitors/support persons will be limited to one person per patient.

Emergency Services:

Emergency services staff reserve the right to further limit the number of visitors allowed based on patient acuity or other extenuating circumstances, provided however, consistent with applicable law, a patient will be entitled to visitation by a designated essential caregiver for a least two (2) hours daily.

Hospice Inpatient Care Units:

- There are no restrictions on visitation hours
- There are no restrictions on ages permitted to visit
- There is a two visitor limitation per patient at a time unless patient is on isolation precautions. Based on the type of isolation precautions in place the clinical team will direct the visitor at the time of screening
- There may be extenuating circumstances allowing for flexibility to these restrictions. In these instances the circumstances will be reviewed by the Patient Care Coordinator for consideration.

Dialysis:

- Intensive Care Units:
Due to patient confidentiality, aseptic technique, infection control processes, complications that can arise during treatment, physical space available, lines and hoses on the floor (that could cause a fall), etc. visitation is strongly discouraged during the dialysis treatment session. However, in the critical care unit **ONE** family member may remain at the bedside during the treatment. The family member will be asked to step out of room during initiation and termination of dialysis treatment or if patient becomes unstable.
- Dialysis lab:
Due to patient confidentiality (HIPPA), aseptic technique, infection control processes, complications that can arise during treatment, physical space available, lines and hoses on the floor (that could cause a fall), etc. visitation is not allowed during the dialysis treatment session. Visitors may wait in the 2nd floor Cardiac Care waiting room.

V. KEYWORDS:

Visitation, visitors, visiting hours, support person, overnight visitors, essential caregiver

VI. REFERENCES:

The Joint Commission Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Hospitals, Rights and Responsibilities of the Individual; Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Condition of Participation for Hospitals, 482.13 Patient's Rights; Florida Statutes, Chapter 408.823 (2022), titled "In-person visitation."