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Owner:	<i>Brian Patrick: Vice President of Nursing</i>
Area:	<i>Patient Care</i>
Standards & Regulations:	
Tags:	<i>System-Wide</i>

Visiting Policy/Procedure During COVID-19 Emergency

PURPOSE

To establish guidelines for visitation during the COVID-19 Emergency.

POLICY

Good Shepherd Health Care System recognizes that visitation by family and friends can be an important therapeutic tool in the healing process. In order to promote this philosophy while also taking pandemic response measures into consideration, the following guidelines have been established.

Good Shepherd Medical Group

All clinics within Good Shepherd Medical Group allow one escort for adult patients (18+) and two escorts for minors (under 18).

Patients may also qualify for additional support persons pursuant to policy "Disabled Patients Right to Designate Support Persons".

Good Shepherd Medical Center

Inpatient & Emergency Department

We ask you to consider using phone calls or video chat (FaceTime, Zoom, etc.) as a way for you to visit your loved ones while they are in the hospital. We can help them access video technology, if needed.

Visiting Hours: 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Patients may have **one visitor at a time** during their emergency or hospital stay*. Visitors are **not** restricted to be the same person throughout the patient stay. Only one visitor may be within the building at a time (one visitor must exit the facility before another visitor can enter). No visitors are allowed for suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients.

- Visitors will be screened about their health before they are allowed to enter the hospital and will be required to wear a mask.
- The designated visitor must be age 16 or older and healthy (no cold or flu-like symptoms and no fever).
- Visitors must follow safety guidelines to limit the spread of COVID-19, including washing their hands,

limiting the surfaces you touch and using any personal protective equipment required by the hospital.

- Visitors must remain in the patient's room except during certain care procedures.
- Unless medically indicated, any visitor/telephone restriction must be done with the consent of the patient.
- The visitor is encouraged not to sit on the beds.
- Any unruly visitor will be asked to leave by the nurse on duty. If visitors refuse to leave, the nursing supervisor will be notified. The night security/police may be called, if necessary.
- Two visitors at one time may be allowed on a case-by-case basis for:
 - A. Children admitted to the hospital
 1. Parent/guardians of children admitted may stay with the minor child 24/7
 2. No infant/child under five years of age shall be left unattended in the patient's room
 - B. Patients receiving end-of-life or palliative care
 - C. Other special circumstances, as needed
 1. Special circumstances may be determined by the Nurse Manager, Nursing Supervisor, or Vice President of Nursing
 2. Special circumstances shall be communicated to Patient Financial Services for access privileges and documented in the patients chart
- Patients may also qualify for additional support persons pursuant to policy "Disabled Patients Right to Designate Support Persons".

Family Birth Center Patients

Maternity patients may have **one** visitor with them through labor, delivery and the initial postpartum recovery time. This visitor may not depart the hospital during the duration of the patient's hospitalization. If they depart, they may not return. Additional precautions may apply for the care of newborns. In special cases involving surrogacy deliveries, the visitor limit may be expanded to three to allow for intended parents and patient's support person.

Emergency Patients

Emergency patients: Any visitor who arrives with a person needing **emergency care** either must remain in the same room with the patient, or should return to their car. All visitors may be restricted at the discretion of the Emergency Department staff. Special circumstances may alter this guideline.

Outpatient Services

Outpatient ancillary and rehabilitation services allow one escort for adult patients (18+) and two escorts for minors (under 18).

- Including but not limited to: Ambulatory Surgical Services, Diagnostic Imaging, Laboratory, Speech Therapy, Cardiopulmonary Rehab, Treatment Center, Diabetes & Nutrition Center, etc.
- Some services may have further restrictions depending upon procedure being performed.
- Escorts or Visitors will typically be requested to wait in the designated waiting areas or may depart the facility.

Patients may also qualify for additional support persons pursuant to policy "Disabled Patients Right to Designate Support Persons".

Faith Minister/Clergy Visitation

- We encourage all area ministers to visit their congregation members in the hospital as Good Shepherd Health Care System considers faith community ministers to be *members of the interdisciplinary treatment team*.
- Consistent with the purpose of the Federal HIPAA regulations, however, any effort on the part of GSHCS to inform ministers of the presence of their congregational members must be **patient** driven, **not minister** driven.
- Upon entrance to the hospital all ministers go through a screening station to be evaluated for covid symptoms. From there they are directed to the ER admitting desk where their ecclesial identity and visit purpose are verified. Once confirmed visiting ministers will be given a temporary badge to be returned to the ER admitting desk upon completion of their visit.
- The ER admitting clerk will call up to the nursing station to alert them to the visiting minister's intentions. Upon arrival to the floor ministers are asked to check in with the nursing station for that unit in order to assure that patient is medically ready for a visit.

Facility Entrance Screening Process for Visitor(s) and/or Support Person(s)

All visitors must answer "no" to all screening questions, and must be without any cold/flu symptoms or fever.

Screening Questions:

- Are you currently experiencing any of the following symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, headache, sore throat, muscle pain, diarrhea or vomiting, new loss of taste or smell)?
- Have you been tested or diagnosed with COVID-19 within the last 14 days?
- Are you here today to be tested for COVID-19?
- Have you had direct contact with someone who has known or suspected COVID-19 in the last 14 days?
- Have you traveled within the last 14 days to areas with widespread or ongoing COVID-19 community spread?

If a visitor answers "yes" to any question or has a temperature above 100.0 F, visitor may be denied entry to the facility. If any escort, visitor, or support person(s) are non-compliant with the screening process or refuse to wear a mask/face covering, they will not be permitted to enter the facility.

DEFINITIONS

Escort: An individual accompanying a patient to a scheduled clinic appointment or an outpatient ancillary service.

Support Person: A family member, guardian, personal care assistant or other paid or unpaid attendant selected by the patient to physically or emotionally assist the patient or ensure effective communication with the patient.

Visitor: A guest entering the facility to visit a patient; this person may or may not be actively involved in the patient's care as a support person.

REFERENCES

CMS Guidance for Infection Control and Prevention of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) in Hospitals,

Psychiatric Hospitals, and Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs): FAQs, Considerations for Patient Triage, Placement, Limits to Visitation and Availability of 1135 Waivers

[Disabled Patients Right to Designate Support Persons](#)

Attachments

No Attachments

Approval Signatures

Step Description	Approver	Date
Executive Team Approval	Jenny Sullivan: Service Excellence Coordinator	2/21/2022
	Brian Patrick: Vice President of Nursing	2/21/2022