



POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Title: PC 518-C Visitation

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Department of Document Owner: NURSING ADMINISTRATN		
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Section: Provision of Care (PC)		

I. SCOPE:

- A. Visitation of patients at Manatee Memorial Hospital (“Hospital”) by family members, friends, guardians, and other individuals (each a “Visitor”) shall be governed by this policy.

II. PURPOSE:

- A. To establish the procedures for visitation of patients at the Hospital by Visitors and to comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including the Florida No Patient Left Alone Act. The Hospital recognizes the therapeutic value of visiting with family and friends and respects the rights of each patient, including those related to visitation.

III. DEFINITIONS:

- A. Designated Support Person means a family member, personal care assistant, similar disability service provider, or other individual knowledgeable about the management of the care of a Patient with Disabilities.
- B. Essential Caregiver means a patient’s Visitor who has been designated by the patient as the patient’s essential caregiver.
- C. Hospital is defined in Section I.
- D. Patients with Disabilities may include, but is not limited to, patients with altered mental status, physical, intellectual or cognitive disability, communication barriers or behavioral concerns, who need assistance from a support person outside the Hospital to provide them with effective care due to the specifics of their disability (as examples, patients with severe hearing loss, dementia, or aphasia).
- E. Visitor is defined in Section I.

IV. POLICY:

- A. All hospital personnel will assist in the implementation of this policy. It is the responsibility of the nursing staff to facilitate the enforcement of this policy within the patient care areas. Visitor control problems that are not manageable within patient care areas should be referred to the appropriate security personnel and to the appropriate Director and/or supervisor. If unresolved, the issue will be brought to the attention of the CEO or COO or CNO or designee.
- B. Visitors to the Inpatient Units must enter through the main entrance of the hospital.
 - 1. All visitors must check in with security upon arrival at the facility. Security will issue a visitor wristband which must be worn by the visitor while in the building.
 - a) Staff entering or exiting the building through secured entrances and exits, or after hours, are not permitted to allow visitors to enter the building without the permission of security. Staff should redirect visitors to a security manned entrance point.
 - b) Any visitor under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

This policy and any related procedures or guidelines were developed based on available evidence, regulatory standards, and accreditation requirements. Caregivers are accountable for following policies, procedural steps, and/or guidelines as they carry out their responsibilities. However, no clinical policy, procedure, or guideline can account every situation, so caregivers remain responsible for exercising their clinical judgment within their scope of practice and varying from a policy, procedure, or guideline in the event where the patient’s circumstances fall outside the scope of the policy.

- C. For the health and safety of our patients, security may inspect any packages, belongings, bags, or other personal items brought into the building.
- D. Visitation by Visitors.
 - 1. In-Person Visitation. Hospital will allow in-person visitation of a patient by any Visitor in all of the following circumstances unless the patient objects or visitation is not clinically appropriate as determined by the patient's physician or against a physician's orders:
 - a) End-of-life situations;
 - b) A patient who was living with family before being brought to or admitted to the Hospital 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; and
 - h) Pediatric patients.
 - 2. Visitation Hours. Patients are permitted to have Visitors each day between the hours of 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. or such other hours as posted on the Hospital's visitation webpage. After hours visitation is subject to approval by the unit charge nurse.
 - a) There are patient care areas that do not follow general visitation due to the specialized nature of the care provided - for example:
 - (1) The Family BirthPlace (Labor and Delivery):
 - (a) Limited to two banded visitors that have been designated by the patient. These are the same two visitors for the entire stay.
 - (b) No children under 18 are permitted.
 - (c) OB Triage allows one visitor per patient. Switching of visitors is not permitted. If mother is admitted, her second visitor is permitted once she goes to her room. No children are permitted in OB Triage.
 - (2) Mother/Baby:
 - (a) Visiting hours are from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
 - (b) Limited to the same two banded visitors designated by the patient in Labor and Delivery.
 - (c) One adult banded visitor may stay the night with the mother after regular visiting hours.
 - (d) Siblings under the age of 18 may visit during "family time" from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. daily. Siblings who are visibly ill may be asked not to visit.
 - (3) NICU:
 - (a) Limited to only two banded visitors 24 hours a day. No other visitors are permitted.
 - (b) No children under the age of 18 may visit. This includes siblings.
 - (c) Certain circumstances may be arranged at the discretion of the director/manager.

- (d) All visitors may be asked to step out during shift changes which occur twice daily between the hours of 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
 - (4) Critical Care:
 - (a) Limit of two visitors in the ICU within the following timeframes: 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
 - (b) Quiet time for patient rest is daily from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
 - (5) Emergency Care Center (ECC):
 - (a) Limit of one visitor may accompany the patient in the exam area. Other visitors may wait in the waiting area during the procedure or treatment if space allows.
 - (b) Visitors may be limited as outlined in the departmental policy, Visitation of Patients Within the Emergency Care Center.
 - (6) Surgical/Procedures/Therapy Departments:
 - (a) Limit of two visitors may accompany the patient to these areas. The visitor may then wait in the waiting area during the procedure or therapy.
 - (7) Outpatient Surgery:
 - (a) Patients may have two visitors in the outpatient surgery area. Special requests will be considered at the discretion of the unit leader.
 - (b) A child who is having outpatient surgery is required to have one parent stay with him or her throughout the outpatient stay.
 - (c) Visitors who are accompanying children or adults during outpatient surgery are requested to wait in the waiting room during surgery and testing.
3. Number of Visitors. A patient is permitted to have two (2) Visitors during visitation hours. Visitors can be switched out during visitation hours. Exceptions to the number of Visitors that a patient is permitted to have may be made at the discretion of the unit charge nurse.
4. Consensual Physical Contact. A patient and his or her Visitor must be permitted to engage in consensual physical contact. In no instance will any Hospital staff prohibit or interfere with such consensual physical contact.
- E. Visitation by Essential Caregivers. A patient may designate a Visitor as an Essential Caregiver. Hospital staff will document in the patient's medical record any Visitor who is designated as that patient's Essential Caregiver. Hospital will permit, during visitation hours, in-person visitation by a patient's Essential Caregiver for at least two (2) hours each day in addition to any other visitation authorized by the Hospital. Hospital staff will not require an Essential Caregiver to provide necessary care to the patient.
- F. Visitation by Clergy. Patients may receive visitation from one religious leader of their choice at any reasonable time, if such visitation can be provided without disruption to the patient's care. The religious leader does not count as the patient's Visitor.
- G. Visitation of Patients with Disabilities. The Hospital will also allow Visitors and Designated Support Persons for patients when doing so is required as a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act and equivalent state laws. Patients with Disabilities who receive care at the Hospital may have a Designated Support Person(s) present with them to support their disability needs. Designated Support Person (s) will be subject to the Hospital's infection control and screening policies and procedures contained in this policy.

- H. Infection Control and Education for Visitors. The Hospital's infection control and education policies and procedures for Visitors is maintained on the Hospital's website on the following webpage: (<https://www.manateememorial.com/patients-visitors/visitor-information>), which may be updated from time to time.
- I. Screening, Personal Protective Equipment, and Other Infection Control Protocols for Visitors. The Hospital's screening, personal protective equipment, and other infection control protocols for Visitors is maintained on the Hospital's website on the following webpage: (<https://www.manateememorial.com/patients-visitors/visitor-information>), which may be updated from time to time.
- J. Safety-Related Policies and Procedures. All safety-related policies and procedures for Visitors contained in this policy shall not be more stringent than those established for the Hospital's staff. To the extent that any safety-related policy and/or procedure for Visitors in this policy is more stringent than those established for the Hospital's staff, the less stringent safety-related policy and/or procedure established for the Hospital's staff shall also apply to Visitors, and the more stringent policy and/or procedure contained in this policy shall not apply.
- K. No Proof of Vaccination or Immunization Requirements. Hospital staff are prohibited from asking any Visitor for proof of any vaccination or immunization. Visitation by Visitors, including Essential Caregivers, is not contingent upon showing proof of any vaccination or immunization.
- L. Responsible Staff Person. The Director of Risk Management is responsible for ensuring that Hospital staff adhere to this policy.

V. REFERENCES:

- A. Florida No Patient Left Alone Act (<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2022/988/BillText/er/HTML>).

VI. REVIEWED:

- A. Nursing Executive and Hospital Quality Council, revised, 5/2012; revised 11/2013
- B. Lorelei DeLaCruz, Director Cardiac Unit; reviewed 3/2019
- C. Karen Noel, BSN, LHRM, Risk Coordinator 11/2016
- D. Tina M. Buchanan, Director Patient Safety & Quality Outcomes 01/2017
- E. Jody Rain, Director of Emergency Care Center, 8/2019
- F. Ann Forgione RN, MSN Divisional Director Operations and Resources 11/2019; 04/2022
- G. Karen Raffensberger, BSN, Risk Coordinator 5/2022

VII. COMMITTEE REVIEW:

- A. Quality and clinical Excellence