

HOSPITAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Title: Patient Visitation

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PURPOSE

Harbor Regional Health Hospital (HRH) recognizes the important role family and other visitors play in a patient's health and overall wellbeing. However, every patient's need for adequate periods of rest and quiet also need to be considered. The purpose of this policy is to provide all patients with the opportunity to rest and recover in comfortable, quiet, private surroundings while enabling family and friends to participate in the healing process. The secondary purpose is to control access to patient rooms in order to protect the rights of patients, visitors, and employees, and to create a safe environment for everyone.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all patients at Harbor Regional Health Community Hospital (HRHCH).

DEFINITIONS:

Family or family member: "A person or persons who play(s) a significant role in an individual's life. A family is a group of two or more persons united by blood or adoptive, marital, domestic partnership or other legal ties. The family may also be a person or persons not legally related to the individual (such as a significant other, friend, or caregiver) whom the individual personally considers to be family."

POLICY

- I. On admission or as soon as possible thereafter, HRHCH shall inform each patient and family members of visitation rights, including any clinical restriction or limitation on those rights. In the event of an infectious disease outbreak in the community and/or a declared disaster incident, visitation limitations will be determined by the *Enhanced Visitation Guidelines Policy, IC-6014*.
- II. HRHCH retains its right to restrict patient visitation when necessary for clinical or patient treatment reasons. HRHCH shall inform each patient and/or family members and document any clinically necessary restrictions or limitations on visitation rights, on admission or as soon as the need for such a restriction or limitation arises. All visiting will be restricted for the following reasons:
 - A. At patient or surrogate decision maker request
 - B. By existing court order that restricts contact
 - C. Patient is undergoing a medical procedure
 - D. Patient is in isolation to prevent spread of disease

- E. For the patient's safety
 - F. Restrictions initiated by the patient's physician, HRHCH senior leadership, safety officer or nursing supervisor due to a crisis or special situation
 - G. Visitation would interfere with the care of other patients
 - H. Disruptive, threatening, or other violent behavior evidenced by the visitor
- III. Restrictions will be posted on the patient door, or in case of Hospital-wide restriction, at the main entrances. Failure to follow the HRHCH restrictions or to cooperate with HRHCH staff may result in removal from HRHCH property.
- IV. Each patient shall be informed of the right, subject to his/her consent, to receive the visitors whom he/she designates. These visitors may include, but are not limited to, a spouse, a state recognized domestic partner, a non-registered domestic partner, other family members, or a friend. The patient shall also be informed of his/her right to withdraw or deny consent at any time.
- V. HRHCH shall not limit, restrict, or deny visitation privileges on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.
- VI. HRHCH shall ensure that all visitors designated by the patient surrogate decision-maker enjoy full and equal visitation privileges consistent with patient preferences.
- VII. HRHCH recognizes that should a patient be incapacitated a surrogate decision-maker will be required to make decisions on behalf of a patient regarding visitors. In no case may HRHCH request documentation of status as a surrogate decision-maker in a way that discriminates on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.

PROCEDURE

I. General Guidelines

- A. HRHCH employees are expected to know and assist visitors in understanding the HRHCH Visitor Policy.
- B. On admission, each patient receives a Patient Handbook from Registration with information regarding patient visitation enclosed within.
- C. The nurse assigned to the patient is responsible for following up and providing additional education and answering the questions of patients, families, and visitors about the HRHCH Visitor Policy and for monitoring the after hours visitor procedures.
- D. Staff encountering noncompliant visitors, shall call Security, Engineering or if necessary, Law Enforcement.
- E. The general policy and limitations of this policy will be indicated, utilizing the hospital web pages, occasional posters and a brochure.
- F. When a patient is incapacitated or otherwise unable to communicate his/her wishes and an individual provides an advanced directive designating an individual as the patient's support person, the hospital will accept this designation and allow the individual to exercise the patient's visitation rights on the patient's behalf. If there is no advanced directive and the individual asserts that they are the support person, the hospital will accept this assertion, without demanding supporting documentation.
- G. A refusal by the hospital of an individual's request to be treated as the patient's support person with respect to visitation rights will be documented in the patient's medical record, along with the specific basis for the refusal.

II. Visitor Expectations:

Visits to a family member or friend in the hospital should be beneficial for both the patient and visitor. The following expectations shall be communicated to visitors by HRHCH staff:

- A. Visitors are expected to comply with all hospital posted signage. Examples may include but are not limited to: optional mask wearing, no smoking areas, weapons are not permitted, and violent and aggressive behavior standards. Visitors who do not comply with posted signage will be asked to leave and may be escorted from the premises by HRHCH staff responding to Code Gray situations, Security, Engineering, or if necessary, Law Enforcement.
- B. Visitors who have experienced a fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat, skin rash, vomiting or diarrhea in the last 48 hours before a visit is planned are not allowed to visit until they are certain they will not expose a patient to more risk of disease.
- C. Observe door signage

“*Stop Signs*” are posted on patient room doors indicating isolation precautions. Patients on isolation precautions are not permitted visitors unless receiving end of life care or other extenuating circumstances as approved by the unit charge nurse or house supervisor. . If visitation is permitted, visitors must follow all specific instructions regarding isolation precautions and PPE requirements as provided by HRHCH staff. Visitors unable or unwilling to follow isolation precautions will not be allowed to visit.

“*No Visitation*” door sign indicates the patient has requested no visitation, is sleeping, or undergoing a medical consult or procedure. No entry is allowed, but visitors may request at the nursing station to leave a note or receive information about when visitation will resume.

A visitor may not enter areas posted with an “Authorized Personnel Only” sign.
- D. Visitors who are disruptive or disturb patients, staff, or other visitors will be asked to stop the disruptive behavior or be escorted from the premises by HRHCH staff responding to Code Gray situations, Security, Engineering or if necessary, Law Enforcement.
- E. Visitors may be asked to leave if a patient’s condition requires immediate medical interventions or treatment.
- F. Visitors are encouraged to visit during posted visiting hours and limit the number of visitors to the assigned visitor limit for the patient’s area of care as described below.

III. Visiting Guidelines by Department

- A. Medical/Surgical Units - Visiting hours are 10:00 am to 7:00pm daily. Family and visitors will be limited to 1 person at a time. . Children under the age of 14 are restricted from visiting. Visitors should be advised that the medical/surgical units are comprised of semi-private rooms. Visitors are expected to respect the privacy and need for healing rest of both patients. Visitors who are unable to meet this expectation may be asked to leave by the unit charge nurse. Exceptions to these limitations may be made for end-of-life situations or at the discretion of the Charge Nurse.
- B. Pediatrics - Parents or guardians are encouraged to stay with children under the age of 16 at all times (see policy #PED001).
- C. Family Birthing Center – Please see FBC policy OB-014 for additional information
 - 1. Labor/Delivery
 - a) Visitors will be permitted according to current CDC recommendations.
 - b) In order to provide a safe, controlled environment, **during delivery**, visitors will be limited to 2-3 people, 14 years old and older, at the discretion of FBC staff.
 - 2. Mother/Baby
 - a) Normal HRHCH visiting hours for adult visitors, 10am – 7pm.

- b) Designated support person and/or immediate family may visit anytime during hospital wide visiting hours.
- c) Visitors may hold baby with permission of the mother, after thorough hand washing with soap and water.
- d) One support person may stay overnight, **no children**
- E. Critical Care Unit - Two (2) visitors at a time may visit for short periods during regular hospital visiting hours, 10:00am – 7:00pm. Immediate family shall have priority over other visitors. CCU staff may limit or suspend visiting if a patient is requiring rest or medical interventions or treatments or if visiting is considered disruptive for the unit or other patients. Children under the age of 14 are restricted from visiting in the CCU. Exceptions may be made for end-of-life situations or at the discretion of the Charge Nurse.
- F. Day Surgery - Each patient is limited to one (1) designated person present during the usual hours of operation between 6:00am – 5:30pm. Exceptions may be granted per Charge Nurse or on-call Nurse discretion.
- G. Post Anesthesia Care Unit - Visitation will be at the discretion of the PACU Charge Nurse.
- H. Emergency Department - Patients may have Two (2) visitors at any one time. Children under the age of 14 are discouraged from visiting, and if present must be supervised by **an adult who is not the registered patient at all times**. Parents, Guardians, and supervising adults should be advised that the environment in the Emergency Department is unpredictable and there is potential for the visiting child to overhear words or witness patient behavior/care activities that may be emotionally upsetting or frightening. Exceptions to the above stated limitations may be made for end-of-life/critical situations or at the discretion of the Charge Nurse.
- I. HarborCrest Behavioral Health – There are no phone calls or visitors allowed for patients in medical detox. Once out of medical detox, patients may have visitors when the Family Program is scheduled. Telecommunication with family is optional. Visiting hours are subject to change and the Weekly Patient Schedule is updated to reflect holiday and other program considerations. See HarborCrest Patient Handbook for additional information.

IV. After Hours Visitation

- A. After hours visitation is discouraged in order to allow adequate rest for the patient.
- B. Overnight stays by visitors are limited to special situations or extenuating circumstances and shall be pre-approved by the House Supervisor.
- C. Overnight stays in patient rooms are limited to private rooms. When there are two patients in a semi-private room no over-night guests shall be allowed to protect the rights and privacy of the other patient in the room.
- D. Any approved visitor must display Visitor Pass on their person at all times.
- E. There is a limit of one (1) pass per patient for overnight visitation. Exceptions may be made for extenuating circumstances by the Charge Nurse or Nursing Supervisor.
- F. After Hours Access to the Hospital:
For safety and security reasons, any family member entering after 4:00 p.m., must enter through the Emergency Department (ED) entrance.

V. Children Visitation

- A. Patient visitation by children is discouraged unless it is beneficial to the patient and/or the children. For details regarding children visitation and specific department limitations, please see section III above, *Visiting Guidelines by Department*.
- B. Children must stay in the room of the patient they are visiting so other patients on the unit can rest without disruption.
- C. Children's behavior is monitored and controlled by a responsible adult, who is not the registered patient, at all times during the visit.

D. If the children visiting are disturbing to other patients or visitors, the responsible adult will be asked to correct the situation or the children's visit will be terminated.

References:

<https://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Transmittals/downloads/R75SOMA.pdf>

"Recommendations and Promising Practices", April 2008, Institute of Family and Patient Centered Care

Legal and other authority: 42 CFR 482.13(h); 42 CFR 485.635(f); RCW 7.70.065; RCW 26.60.070;

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