

NEWMAN REGIONAL HEALTH

Title/Description: Patient Visitation Policy		Filing Number (not required):
Approved Date: 04/28/2023 Last Reviewed Date: 04/28/2023	Approved by: CAO/CNO	Document Owner: CAO/CNO
References/Resources Cited: CMS CFR 485.645, 485.635(f) ACHC 06.10.00, 06.10.02, 11.01.09		Supersedes:

POLICY:

Newman Regional Health (NRH) promotes and supports a patient and family centered approach to care. The purpose of this policy is to define and set expectations regarding persons visiting hospitalized patients and to demonstrate our commitment to provide visitation in accordance with our non-discrimination policy, which provides access without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, disability, age, religion, marital status, citizenship, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, and/or other legally protected classification. It also ensures that all visitors enjoy full and equal visitation privileges consistent with patient preferences.

Clear explanations should be provided to family members and visitors about what they can and can't do to help the patient and where they can be within the nursing unit.

Guidelines for the participation of persons spending time with the patient should be flexible in order to respond to the diverse and changing needs and preferences of each patient and the hospital. Wherever possible, we recognize and honor patients' wishes regarding visitation. Patients may need help in modifying the visiting schedule or expectations about time spent with family members and visitors.

DEFINITIONS:

Family or Family Member: The terms "family" or "family member" in all clinical policies at NRH are understood and interpreted to include any person(s) who plays a significant role in an individual's socio-emotional life. This may include a person(s) not legally related to the individual. Members of "family" may include spouses, domestic partners, and both different-sex and same-sex significant others. "Family" may include a minor patient's parents, regardless of the gender of either parent. Solely for purposes of visitation policy, the concept of parenthood is to be liberally construed without limitation as encompassing biological parents, legal partners, and other persons operating in caretaker roles, consistent with applicable law.

Visitor: A "visitor" is defined as a guest of the patient. Family members are considered to be visitors as well.

PROCEDURE:

1. The patient or the patient's designated representative, in conjunction with the registered nurse (RN) and healthcare team, may make visitation limitations. Family and visitors will not be denied access to the patient without a legitimate reason, as determined by the hospital. Special considerations that determine the amount of time family and visitors spend with the patient include:

- a. Clinical and emotional needs of the patient. Having family or visitors present must not put the patient at risk or bring the patient harm. Examples include patient exhaustion, overstimulation, or marked increase in agitation and/or the clinical and emotional needs of the patient.
 - b. Family member's or visitor's inability to meet hospital infection control policies.
 - c. The need to maintain a sterile environment during bedside procedures.
 - d. Limitations as requested by the patient or patient's designated representative.
 - e. Space limitations in patient rooms. In the intensive care areas, the preferred number of family members at the bedside is no more than two at a time.
 - f. Patient, family, visitor, or employee safety issues.
 - g. Visitors or family members with prohibitive legal documentation, such as applicable restraining orders, will not be allowed to visit.
 - h. Entrance F doors are scheduled to lock from 6:00pm to 6:00am. During that time, everyone must enter through the Emergency Department entrance and security will screen all visitors and confirm the patient's name of whom they are visiting. Security will then send the visitor to Registration who will call the floor to inform the nurses that a visitor is on their way up. If patient has opted out of the Facility Directory and the visitor does not have a room number, security will inform the visitor that we have no one here with that name. If the visitor does not know the patient's full name, they will not be allowed through the locked doors.
2. To help patients recover and to not overly tire patients, visits should be brief, quiet and pleasant. The patient or patient's designated representative, in conjunction with the registered nurse and healthcare team, may make additional limitations for family and visitors, especially in the intensive care unit and women's life care unit.
 3. Children should always be accompanied by an adult other than the patient. Visits by children younger than 12 years of age should be coordinated with the patient's registered nurse and the patient or patient's designated representative. Information and access should be developmentally appropriate. Children can only visit if they are able to comply with all isolation and/or infection control precautions.

There may be unique and extenuating circumstances (i.e., imminent death, impending surgery, etc.) that require compassionate exceptions to these guidelines. The registered nurse and the health care team, using professional judgment and in collaboration with the patient or the patient's designated representative, will consider the unique family circumstances and patient needs when applying these guidelines. In these circumstances, to the greatest extent feasible, family will be allowed brief visits.
 4. Visitors are only allowed in patient areas and will not be allowed in working areas such as the Nursing Station, Pharmacy, Lab, Dietary, Laundry, Surgery or Central Supply. The only exception is for pre-arranged and approved tours provided by the hospital's Education Department.

Family and Visitor Behavior:

1. Family and visitors are expected to abide by conduct supportive of the hospital environment. Family or visitors may be asked to leave the premises if they become disruptive or interfere with the

general comfort and care of the patients, visitors, or staff. Hospital security will be notified to handle disruptive issues as needed.

2. Family or visitors may not possess or consume alcohol or illegal drugs while on the hospital campus.
3. Family or visitors may not smoke while on the NRH campus. Family or visitors who wish to smoke while visiting may only do so off campus.

Special Considerations:

1. In special situations, an adult family member may spend the night with the patient if it contributes to the well-being of the patient. The family member must be able to safely stay alone and take care of their own needs.
2. Children may not remain overnight in a patient room.
3. Patients in police custody and/or correctional services custody will not be permitted to have visitors.
4. Behavioral Health - Please see [Behavioral Health & Safety Precautions](#)
5. In the event of a community-wide outbreak of illness, the hospital reserves the right to limit visitation in order to prevent the spread of illness.

Emergency Services/Clinical Decision Unit:

1. The length and frequency of visits will be at the discretion of the Nurse Manager/Charge Nurse after taking into account the patient's condition.
2. All family members and visitors will be screened by security before can enter the Emergency Department and/or Clinical Decision Unit. See Safety Management Plan.
3. Every effort will be made to communicate patient information, condition, and location updates as appropriate as quickly as possible to the family and legal decision maker via the physician, nurse and/or social worker.

Surgical Services:

Family members may not observe procedures in the Surgery departments. The only exception is bringing family into a C-section. Family members may be allowed in PACU under the discretion of the OR Director or their designee. The patient has the right to refuse any observer.

Labor and Delivery:

Prior to delivery, the patient will be asked to identify her labor coach and/or coaches. During labor the patient may receive visitors, including siblings, for short periods. Coaches are asked to keep other family and friends that are waiting in the lobby informed of the patient's progress.

In keeping with patient and family central care, the patient may wish to have more than their labor coach in the room at the time of delivery. Staff will endeavor to comply with patient wishes in non-emergent situations. Upon parental request siblings may attend delivery with prior approval by Physician. An adult other than the coach must be responsible for the children during the delivery.

During the cesarean section only one coach may accompany the patient into the surgery room. That one person may stay in the PACU with the mother and baby. After delivery it is advisable that the coach notifies family and friends waiting in the lobby of the birth and tells them an approximate time that they may see the new family.

If a patient's condition is not stable, the attending physician or charge nurse may limit visitation. The patient's significant other accompanied by a nurse, may carry the baby to the Labor & Delivery doorway to be viewed briefly by family and friends.

Postpartum Visitation:

When the mother and baby are in stable condition the parents may decide who they want to visit them during the hospital stay. Visitors must be free of communicable diseases or recent exposures. Children must be accompanied by an adult. If the mother does not want visitors a "No Visitors" sign will be provided and the nursing staff will screen visitors. Everyone having direct contact with the newborn must wash their hands thoroughly in the patient's restroom with soap or use the alcohol-based foam.

QUIET TIME:

A daily time from 2am-3am and 2pm-3pm is designated as quiet time. This allows for family bonding and rest. NRH staff including nursing, lab, CPS, medical records, and pharmacy is not to enter room except by patient request and in emergency.

Pediatric Visitation:

Parents of the pediatric patients are not considered visitors. Parents are encouraged to stay with their children as much as they feel is necessary.

Siblings and peer relationships are very important to the pediatric patient.

1. All children visiting must be free of signs or symptoms of infection.
2. Visitation may be restricted if the patient is in isolation.
3. Siblings are not to spend the night in the hospital. Exceptions may be considered for breast-feeding infants.
4. Visitation restrictions may become necessary at any time due to viral conditions on the unit or in the community, as imposed by the Infection Control Supervisor.
5. Siblings must remain in the patient's room under parental supervision.
6. Children shall not be allowed to play unsupervised in the hall or other areas of the hospital and must be under the supervision of a responsible adult at all times. All isolation precautions posted on the patient's door will be followed by all persons entering the room.

Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit:

At Newman Regional Health we encourage visitors for our inpatient rehabilitation and swing bed patients as we value the importance of friends, family and pets (see [Pet visitation/Pet Therapy Visits](#)) in

the recovery of those we serve. Procedure and rehabilitative therapy sessions are important components of our patients wellbeing and we appreciate visitation that promotes our patients to be able to attend therapy or procedures as scheduled. Delaying or changing scheduled therapy sessions or procedures for visitation is discouraged.

There are situations when patients benefit from their family members attending therapy sessions with them such as when preparing for home care. The health care team will help determine if that is beneficial. If visitors ask to attend, we will do our best to arrange a time.

Swing Bed Patients:

Swing bed patients have a right to receive visitors of his or her choosing at the time of his or her choosing, subject to the residents right to deny visitation when applicable and in a manner that does not impose on the rights of another patient.

1. The facility must provide immediate access to a resident by immediate family and other relatives of the resident, subject to the residents right to deny or withdraw consent at any time.
2. The facility must provide immediate access to a resident by others who are visiting with the consent of the resident subject to reasonable clinical and safety restriction and the residents' right to deny or withdraw consent at any time.
3. At NRH we have only private rooms, however Swing Bed patients also have the right to share a room with his or her spouse when married residents are at the same facility and both spouses consent to the arrangement.

**** DURING PERIODS OF EPIDEMICS ALL VISITATION MAY BE RESTRICTED FOR SAFETY.**