



Visitation Policy

Purpose:

1. To outline the procedure for general visiting hours
2. To provide restrictions to visitation during hospital declared emergency events, including certain illnesses
3. To inform patients and visitors of visitation rights
4. To provide a support system and shaping a more familiar environment, engendering trust in families, creating a better working relationship between hospital staff and family members.

Scope:

1. Inpatient areas for general visitation
2. Outpatient areas for general visitation
3. Inpatient and outpatient areas for hospital declared emergency events, including certain illnesses
4. This policy does not encompass the physician practices.

Policy:

1. Each patient has the right, subject to his or her consent, to receive any visitors whom he/she designates including but not limited to a spouse, domestic partner, another family member or a friend. The patient has the right to withdraw this consent at any time.
2. Patient visitations shall not be restricted based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation or disability. All visitors will be given full and equal visitation privileges consistent with the patient's wishes.

NH RSA 151:21 XVIII NH Patient Bill of Rights / Terminal Illness

The patient shall be entitled to have the patient's parents, if a minor, or spouse, or next of kin, or a personal representative, if an adult, visit the facility, without restriction, if the patient is considered terminally ill by the physician responsible for the patient's care.

Procedure:

General visitation – inpatient areas

1. Each patient and family will be informed of the visitation policy at the time of admission.
2. Each patient is informed of his/her visitation rights including any clinical restriction or limitation of these rights, in advance of receiving patient care whenever possible.
3. Exceptions to the visitation policy may be made by the House Coordinator or Administrator on Call.
4. General visiting hours for the Medical Surgical Unit are from 08:00 to 20:00 Exceptions can be made for specific patients by request to the House Coordinator.
5. Visiting hours for the Intensive Care Unit are not restricted to a time frame, however visitors will be allowed at the discretion of the ICU nurse based on the policy.
6. Only two visitors are allowed at a time. Other visitors will be asked to wait in the Family Room or the Main Lobby.
7. During normal visiting hours, all children under the age of 15 will be accompanied and directly always supervised by an adult while in the facility.
8. Dress Code must include shoes and shirt and appropriate mask.

9. Visitors will be required to answer screening questions and may be asked not to visit if they display symptoms of infectious illness.
10. At the request of the House Coordinator, Communications will announce at 7:30pm "Visiting hours will be ending at 8:00pm".
11. At the request of the House Coordinator, at 8:30pm Communications will announce, "Visiting hours are now over. Please leave the hospital promptly and quietly. Thank you and good night".
12. Visitors who do not leave at 8:30pm will be reminded of the visiting hours by the Nursing staff.

General visitation - outpatient areas

1. Emergency Department

- a. Visiting hours for the Emergency Department are not restricted to a time frame; however visitors are normally limited to 2 immediate family members.
- b. At the discretion of the ED Physician/RN visitors may be further limited if visitors are felt to interfere with patient care.
- c. More than 2 visitors will be allowed only with the permission of the ED Physician or RN.
- d. Exceptions to this policy will be made by the ED Physician/RN on a case-by-case basis.

2. Same Day Surgery and Oncology

- a. Oncology: a single visitor is allowed to attend provider visit in oncology. During treatment and/or infusion, visitors are asked to wait in the waiting area.
- b. Same Day Surgery: visitor will then wait in one of the designated waiting areas while the patient is in surgery. Post-operatively, the visitor may return to see the patient briefly, at the discretion of the surgeon, anesthetist or PACU nurse.

Hospital Declared Emergency Events

1. Based upon a decision of the Hospital Command Center / Incident Command, visitation restrictions may be imposed. These restrictions may be related to a hospital declared emergency event, including certain illnesses. Restricted groups may include:
 - a. Individuals with Covid or flu-like symptoms should not visit any patients at Weeks Medical Center. These symptoms include but are not limited to:
 - i. Fever greater than 100.4 F
 - ii. Cough
 - iii. Sore Throat
 - iv. Runny or stuffy nose
 - v. Diarrhea and vomiting
 - vi. Loss of taste or smell
 - b. WMC will take steps to inform patients and family members of the visitation restrictions.
 - c. If an individual insists on visiting a patient while experiencing these symptoms they MUST use universal precautions (gown, mask, gloves) while in the facility.
 - d. Children under the age of 18 may not be allowed to visit patients in certain emergency situations.
 - e. Weeks Medical Center reserves the right to further restrict visitations as needed which may include:
 - i. Infection Control Issues
 - ii. Interference with the care of other patients
 - iii. An existing Court Order restricting contact
 - iv. Disruptive, Threatening or Violent behavior of any kind
 - v. Patient or patient's roommate needs rest or privacy
 - vi. A patient undergoing a care intervention. However, any patient who requests that at least one visitor be allowed to remain in the room to provide support and comfort will be allowed.
 - f. Individuals who do not follow Substance abuse protocols.
 - g. Visitation shall not interfere with the care of other patients
 - h. A refusal of an individual's request to be treated as the patient's support person with respect to visitation rights must be documented in the patient's medical record, along with the specific basis for the refusal.

- i. When a patient is incapacitated or otherwise unable to communicate his or her wishes and no one has presented an advance directive, an individual who asserts that he/she, as the patient's spouse, domestic partner (including a same-sex domestic partner), parent or other family member, friend, or otherwise, is the patient's support person is to be accepted without a demand for supporting documentation

Related Form:

Receipt of Patient Information form #145.

References:

NH Bill of Rights

Title: Visitation Policy
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