

Northeast Alabama Regional Medical Center

Infection Prevention and Control

Visitation Guidelines

RMC medical inpatients who are negative for COVID-19 will be allowed two visitors per day during their stay, including **ONE** overnight visitor. Each patient will be allowed to rotate two visitors between the hours of 7:00am-7:00pm. Departments **excluded** from this include Emergency Department, Behavioral Health inpatients, ICU and procedural areas. Specific visitation guidelines for excluded areas are noted and outlined in this policy. Exceptions may be made in special circumstances. Entry is subject to requirements regarding screening and masking. Entry will be denied to anyone who screens positive for symptoms of COVID-19. Visitors/caregivers must bring their own mask and wear it for the entirety of the visit.

The following criteria apply to all visitors at RMC Anniston Campus and Stringfellow Campus:

I. COVID-19 County Positivity Rate and Facility COVID-19 Status

- The Calhoun County positivity rate along with the current rate of COVID inpatients is monitored daily by Infection Control. In the event rates rise to a level that is consistent with very high risk for community spread, recommendations may be made to implement changes to this visitation policy. Any changes made will be in an effort to protect the community from future spread of the virus and to protect our current patients and staff.

II. VISITATION

• COVID-19 & Symptomatic PUI Inpatients

- COVID-19 positive or patients under investigation (PUI) for COVID-19 will not be allowed to have visitors. Virtual visitation will be provided as a way to connect the patient with their family in these situations.

• All NON-COVID Medical Inpatients

- RMC medical inpatients who are negative for COVID-19 will be allowed two visitors per day during their stay, including **ONE** overnight visitor, as we continue to recognize the importance of reducing unnecessary exposure.
- Each patient will be allowed to rotate two visitors between the hours of 7:00am-7:00pm
- All visitors will be provided a visitor sticker with the patient's name and room number.
- Visitation hours are from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- Visitors will not be allowed to exit and re-enter the building between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. with the exception of patients admitted after hours or those given a specific arrival time for outpatient procedures.

The following criteria are required for all visitors:

- Visitors must be 16 years or older.
- Visitors must wear a face covering during their visit. Visitors will wear their own face covering upon arrival to the facility and while on hospital grounds the only exception is when they are in the patient's room and staff is not present. Face coverings will not be provided to visitors. Face coverings can be made of a variety of materials, including cloth,

but must cover the nose and mouth. Visitors who are unable or unwilling to wear a mask will not be permitted in the facility during periods of Universal Masking requirements.

Universal Masking is determined in collaboration with Infection Control and Administration.

- All visitors must be screened for symptoms, temperature taken at the Emergency Room entrance, and asked about possible exposure to COVID 19. Any individual with symptoms or who has been advised to self- quarantine because of exposure is prohibited from visiting. Any individual who is a known positive in their quarantine window is prohibited from visiting.
- Visitors are asked to remain in the patient's room and not leave the unit or roam the hospital except for basic personal needs (ex: food, restroom).
- Visitors must maintain hand hygiene and appropriate social distancing.
- All visitors must enter through specified entrances:
 - Entry into the facility is available at the Main and Emergency Room entrances.
 - Visitors at **RMC Anniston Campus** may utilize the Main entrance Monday-Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. The Emergency Room Entrance is available from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on weekends and holidays.
 - Visitors at **Stringfellow Campus** may utilize the Main entrance Monday- Friday from 5:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and the Emergency Room entrance from 3:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. The Emergency Room entrance is available from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on weekends and holidays.

- **Outpatient Procedures**

One visitor (meeting the above requirements) may accompany the patient to assist with entry into the hospital and registration.

- Visitors at **RMC Anniston Campus** will be permitted to utilize existing waiting rooms as long as space is available in consideration of social distancing requirements.
- Visitors who choose to wait in the facility are asked to remain in the waiting room and not leave the unit or roam the hospital except for basic personal needs (Food, Restroom, etc.)
- **Stringfellow Campus** exceptions include:
 - Patients/visitors waiting in the radiology or Emergency Room waiting areas must maintain social distancing requirements. These waiting areas will be utilized as long as space permits, and patients who are deemed safe may also be asked to wait outside or in their personal car in order to maintain social distancing guidelines as needed.

- **COVID Convalesced Patients**

Once patients have a physician order that they are now COVID Convalesced, meaning they are no longer considered infectious, they will be allowed to have visitors. Visitors will be subject to all visitation rules for our non-COVID inpatients, including masking, hand hygiene, and limiting visitation to the patient room.

- **End-of-Life Patients**

For non-COVID inpatients in which death is reasonably anticipated within 24-48 hours, visitors (meeting the above requirements) will be allowed at bedside.

- Visitors will be required to follow all instructions from clinical staff related to hand washing, Personal Protective Equipment, entry/exit of facility, length of time with patient, etc.

- **Maternity Care Patients**

- Each patient will be allowed to rotate two visitors between the hours of 7:00am-7:00pm.
- Sibling visitation will be allowed daily 5:00pm-7:00pm
- A certified doula will not count as a visitor

- The visitors will receive an identification band from L&D/Post-Partum staff on admission. If they choose to leave the hospital, the band must be shown to re-enter the unit. This band will not be replaced if removed or damaged.
 - In situations that involve adoption or surrogacy, visitation will be evaluated on case by case basis.
 - A support person for COVID-19 positive patients will be determined on a case by case basis in collaboration with the attending physician and Infection Control.
- **Behavioral Health Inpatients**
 - Visitation will be scheduled by the Behavioral Health staff. Visitation will be scheduled daily between the hours of 6pm-7pm.
 - Visitation will be 15 minute increments.
- **Emergency Department Patients- RMC Anniston Campus**
 - One visitor per non covid patient will be allowed in order to reduce the risk of exposure to the visitors, staff and physicians.
 - Visitors will not be permitted inside the Emergency Department until the patient is placed in a room; Except for certain situations approved by the Emergency Department staff.
 - Pediatric patients will be allowed 2 parents/guardians
 - Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the clinical staff based on the physical or psychological needs of the patient.
- **Emergency Department Patients- Stringfellow Campus**
 - One visitor per non covid patient will be allowed in order to reduce the risk of exposure to the visitors, staff and physicians.
 - Visitors will not be permitted inside the Emergency Department until the patient is placed in a room; Except for certain situations approved by the Emergency Department staff.
 - Pediatric patients will be allowed 2 parents/guardians
 - Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the clinical staff based on the physical or psychological needs of the patient.
- **Radiation Oncology**
 - Radiation Oncology patients are allowed one care taker to assist the patient getting to treatment. Other exceptions may be made for consult and follow up appointments.
- **Pediatric Care**
 - Pediatric patients will be allowed two parents/guardians. Pediatric patients must be accompanied by a parent/guardian at all times.

III. PASTORAL CARE

A. Pastors, Clergy, Religious Leaders

- Pastors, Clergy, or Religious leaders are permitted to visit with patients at the patient's discretion.
- These representatives will not count as a visitor for the patient.
- Pastors, Clergy, or Religious leaders are subject to the same requirements listed above.
- Virtual visitation and in-person visitation will be provided as a way to connect with COVID positive or symptomatic PUIpatients. The recommendation for in-person visit:

A. The charge RN or the Nurse Manager would identify the COVID patient(s) who would need to be visited by the Chaplain. It is preferred that the Chaplain makes his/her rounds only once a day and sees all the patients needed to be seen during that visit that day.

- B. The Chaplain will be provided with masks, gloves, shields and robes, the same personal protective equipment worn by the medical and nursing staff.
- C. The Chaplain will be made aware of the potential risk of transmission.
- D. Preference for the Chaplain to be vaccinated and boosted per the CDC.

Health Information Department

- Two patient representatives permitted to enter via the main hospital entrance with intent of proceeding directly to the first floor Health Information/Medical Records Department.
- Required to follow the same criteria as visitors (see above).

IV. References

- Per the “Safer at Home” state order issued by Governor Ivey, effective March 6, 2021, all hospitals shall ensure that each patient who tests negative for SARS-CoV-2 or who is not suspected of having COVID-19 may be accompanied by two caregivers or visitors at a time, subject to reasonable restrictions imposed on the entrance of persons because of the COVID-19 county positivity rate, the facility’s COVID-19 status, a patient’s COVID-19 status, visitor’s symptoms, lack of adherence to proper infection control practices, or other relevant factors related to the COVID-19 pandemic, consistent with the following guidance from the federal government:
 - For hospitals: “Hospital Visitation – Phase II Visitation for Patients who are Covid-19 Negative” issued by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on June 26, 2020, and available at <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/covid-hospital-visitation-phase-ii-visitation-covid-negative-patients.pdf>
- “Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic (CDC) on July 15, 2020 are available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>

Updated 6/11/2020, 9/30/2020, 10/6/2020, 11/23/2020, 12/7/2020, 2/15/2021, 2/23/2021, 3/4/21, 5/18/21, 08/05/21, 8/10/21, 10/13/2021, 10/20/2021, 11/08/2021, 12/27/2021, 12/29/2021, 01/10/2022, 03/10/2022