

Northeast Alabama Regional Medical Center Infection Prevention and Control Visitation Guidelines

Due to a decrease in COVID-19 rates in the community, RMC Health System visitation policy has been updated to reflect the following details:

Effective May 20, 2021, all RMC patients who are negative for COVID-19, with the exception of the emergency room and behavioral health inpatients, will be allowed two visitors during their stay, including one overnight visitor, subject to requirements regarding screening and masks.

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

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

A. 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.

B. All NON-COVID Inpatients

- Two visitors will be permitted for each patient during their stay, subject to reasonable restrictions.
- The visitors will not be allowed to rotate with others during the patient's stay, as we continue to recognize the importance of reducing unnecessary exposure.
- Visitation hours are from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., with the exception of one overnight visitor per patient from 7:00pm to 7:00am.

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, 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. All visitors will be screened using questions and temperature checks. Entry will be denied to anyone who screens positive for symptoms of COVID-19 such as a temperature of 100.4, cough or shortness of breath.
 - Visitors are asked to wear a visitor badge at all times. Badges will be provided at point of entry.
 - Visitors at **RMC Anniston** may utilize the Main entrance Monday-Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and Saturday-Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 pm. The Emergency Room Entrance is available from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on weekends and holidays.
 - Visitors at **Stringfellow Memorial Hospital** may utilize the Main entrance Monday-Friday from 5:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and the Emergency Room entrance from 1:00 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.

C. Outpatient Procedures

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

- Visitors at **RMC Anniston** 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 Memorial Hospital** 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.

D. 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.

E. Maternity Care Patients

Each patient will be allowed two visitors to accompany them throughout their stay. A certified doula can be one of the support persons.

- The visitors (meeting all above requirements) will be screened on admission and any time they reenter the building.

- The visitors will receive an identification band from L&D/Post-Partum staff on admission. The band must be shown to screeners at reentry. This band will not be replaced if removed or damaged.
- 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.

F. Behavioral Health Inpatients

- Visitors for Behavioral Health patients are subject to the same requirements listed in Section B above.
- Visitation will be scheduled by the Behavioral Health staff. Visitation will be scheduled daily between the hours of 6pm-7pm.

G. Emergency Department Patients

- Visitors for Emergency Room patients are subject to the same requirements listed in Section B above. One visitor per patient will be allowed in order to reduce the risk of exposure to the visitors, staff and physicians.

H. 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.

I. Pediatric Care

- Pediatric patients will be allowed one overnight visitor. Pediatric patients must be accompanied by a parent 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 will be provided as a way to connect with COVID positive or symptomatic PUI patients.

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