

# Northeast Alabama Regional Medical Center

## Infection Prevention and Control

### Visitation Guidelines

Effective August 11, 2021, All RMC patients who are negative for COVID-19, with the exception of the Stringfellow Emergency Department and behavioral health inpatients, will be allowed one non-rotating visitor during their stay, 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**

##### **• 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 Inpatients**

- One visitor will be permitted for each patient during their stay, subject to reasonable restrictions.
- The visitor will not be allowed to rotate with others during the patient's stay, as we continue to recognize the importance of reducing unnecessary exposure.
- All visitors will be provided a band with the patient's name and room number. They will be required to present that ID band to screeners prior to re-entering the building. The band should remain on the visitor until the patient is discharged.
- 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, 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** 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 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** 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.

- **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 one visitor to accompany them throughout their stay. Rotation will not be allowed.
- A certified doula will not count as a visitor.

- The visitor 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 reenter 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.
- **Emergency Department Patients- RMC Anniston Campus**
    - One visitor per 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.
    - 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**
    - Visitors will not be permitted inside the Emergency Department.
    - 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 one overnight visitor. Pediatric patients must be accompanied by a parent at all times.
- **Oncology Unit**
    - Patients assigned to the Oncology unit will be allowed one visitor during their stay.

### 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>

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