

# Northeast Alabama Regional Medical Center Infection Prevention and Control

## Visitation Guidelines

### **ADDENDUM: EFFECTIVE December 7, 2020**

**Due to a rise in COVID-19 rates in the community visitation will be restricted beginning at 9pm on 12/7/2020 until further notice.**

- No visitors will be permitted unless deemed by the care team as necessary for patient care or end-of-life considerations.**
- For non-COVID inpatients in which death is reasonably anticipated within 24-48 hours, two visitors (meeting the requirements below) will be allowed at the bedside. These visitors cannot rotate.**
- Maternity patients will be allowed one visitor that must remain with the patient throughout their stay.**

Per the “Safer at Home” state order issued by Governor Ivey, effective October 2, 2020, 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 one caregiver or visitor 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-visitationphase-ii-visitation-covid-negative-patients.pdf>

### **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 Patients**

One visitor at a time will be permitted for each patient, subject to reasonable restrictions.

#### **The following criteria is required for all visitors:**

- Visitors must be 16 years or older.
- Visitors must wear a face covering for the duration of their visit. Visitors will wear their own face covering upon arrival to the facility and while on hospital grounds. 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 may utilize the Main entrance Monday – Friday from 6:00 am to 7:00 pm. The Emergency Room entrance is available from 7:00 am – 7:00 pm on weekends and holidays. Visitors will not be allowed to enter the hospital after 7:00 pm unless requested by the clinical care team. Emergency Room patients may enter through the Emergency room entrance at any time.

### **C. Outpatients**

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

### **D. End-of-Life Patients**

For non-COVID inpatients in which death is reasonably anticipated within 24-48 hours, 2 visitors (meeting the above requirements) will be allowed at bedside.

- Visitors may rotate.
- 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 one visitor to accompany them throughout their stay.

- The visitor (meeting all above requirements) will be screened on admission and any time they reenter the building.
- 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.
- The visitor will receive an identification band by 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**

- No visitors will be permitted unless deemed by the care team as necessary for patient care or end-of-life considerations.
- If approved by the clinical team, one caregiver (subject to the same requirements listed in Section B above) will be permitted to remain in the patient's room. That visitor will not be permitted to rotate with others or leave and reenter the building.

### **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**

- "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-visitationphase-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, and available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>

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