

POLICY NUMBER		ON051PCS
ORIGINAL DATE:		January 1974
TITLE:	VISITATION POLICY	
KEYWORDS:	Support person; visitor; legal guardian	

ACCOUNTABILITY:

SVP & Chief Nursing Officer

OBJECTIVES:

The Mission of Catholic Health Initiatives is to nurture the healing ministry of the Church, supported by education and research. Fidelity to the Gospel urges us to emphasize human dignity and social justice as we create healthier communities. To fulfill this mission, CHI St. Vincent will recognize and making use of the beneficial role that appropriate visitation can play in a patient's healing process. To enhance the safety and security of St. Vincent patients and staff by promoting therapeutic visitor access to the hospital.

DEFINITIONS:

Patient Designated Visitor (henceforth "visitor"): individuals chosen or designated by the patient to visit him or her. Visitors include, but are not limited to, a spouse, a domestic partner, other family member or a friend.

Support Person: the individual who decides who may visit the patient if the patient is or becomes incapacitated. This individual is not a legal representative (see below).

Legal Representative or Legal Guardian: individual making healthcare decisions for the patient who is unable to make their own decision. Usually defined by Power of Attorney. Refer to Informed Consent policy.

POLICY:

- I. **General Visitation Principles:** CHI St. Vincent has adopted the Relationship Based Care Model as our Professional Practice model. As part of that model we chose to engage in relationships that are healing and therapeutic as well as authentic and intentional. We recognize that the patient and their support person(s) should be viewed as an inseparable unit and as such, we define our visitation to support those relationships.

Visitation Policy

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- A. The hospital will inform each patient upon admission of his or her right, subject to his or her consent to receive visitors whom he or she designates, including but not limited to, a spouse, a domestic partner, another family member, or a friend.
- B. The patient has the right to withdraw or deny consent at any time for any visitor. If the patient is unable to identify visitors, their next of kin or power of attorney may fulfill this role. Appropriate paperwork must be presented regarding power of attorney in order to fulfill this role.
- C. Patients' preference and needs govern the number of visitors permitted at any given time, as well as the length of visitation. Visitors are asked to conduct themselves appropriately at all times.
 - i. It is recommended that visitors are limited when appropriate, to 2 (two) to maintain a healing environment for each patient, however, exceptions or limitations may be made at the discretion of the RN.
 - ii. Visitation may be limited at certain times for patients in the critical care setting at the discretion of the RN. Only 1 (one) visitor may be allowed if the patient is critical.
 - iii. Attention to type of device and equipment in place on patient can also dictate amount of people in the patient room.
- D. Visitation hours for Inpatient/ ICU/Critical Care:
 - i. Visiting hours will begin at 6am and end at 8pm.
 - 1 SVM: visiting hours will begin 8am and end at 8pm.
 - ii. At 8pm any visitor not staying overnight will be asked to exit the building.
 - 1 1 (one) visitor will be allowed to stay overnight with the exception of COVID-19 patient and ICU units.
- E. Hospital policies with respect to "Isolation" will govern visitors to the extent specified in the description of each category of Isolation.
- F. To ensure limitation of potentially infectious disease transmission, the visitor is encouraged not to sit or sleep on a patient's bed. Nor, for safety reasons, may they sleep on the floor of a patient's room or any common waiting area.
- G. Children under 12 visiting patients must be supervised by a responsible adult at all times. Children under 12 may be restricted in certain situations based on patient condition.
- H. The hospital prohibits discrimination of visitors based on age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, language, physical or mental disability, socioeconomic status, sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity or expression.
- I. The rights, safety and security of the patient, as well as those of other patients, visitors and staff must be respected as they relate to noise, television, clutter, disturbances or other actions that are inconsistent with quality patient care and/or hospital procedures. I. The hospital may also restrict visitation in the following instances:

- i. To comply with existing court orders restricting contact with a patient
- ii. Disruptive, threatening or violent behavior of any kind
- iii. When visitation may interfere with the care of other patients
- iv. Patient need for rest or privacy

II. Special Unit Considerations:

A. Labor and Delivery Visitation

- i. One Coach/Support person may be present during a procedure at the discretion of the physician or attend a c-section delivery and stay with the patient during recovery if the patient is awake with an epidural. If general anesthesia is used, visitors will be restricted during surgery to ensure patient safety.
- ii. 2 (two) visitors at a time may be allowed to visit a patient, post-delivery, on the L&D unit beginning at 6am and ending at 8pm.
- iii. Any additional visitors will be allowed to wait in the L&D waiting area and can swap out to allow 2 (two) visitors in the patient room at one time.
- iv. 1 (one) Coach/ Support person will be allowed to stay with the patient during delivery, post-delivery, and overnight.
 - 1 Allowing a total of 3 visitors in the patient room at once post-delivery.
- v. During delivery 1 (one) Coach/Support person and 1 (one) visitor will be allowed in the room with no trading out.
- vi. To limit the potential spread of infection and the harmful impact infection may have on the infant, the following recommendations are encouraged for children visiting on the L&D unit:
 - 1 Limit to the patient's siblings or members of the household.
 - 2 The child(ren) should have updated immunizations.
 - 3 The child(ren) should be free of any symptoms of illness.

B. Behavioral Health Visiting Hours are promoted to provide therapeutic healing and a positive atmosphere to the patient.

- i. To ensure the safety of our patients and their visitors the following recommendations are made for Behavioral Health:
 - 1. All visitors must be at least 16 years of age.
 - 2. They must be checked in and out of the unit by a staff member.
 - 3. Other visitation is considered a formal part of the therapeutic program. Such visits must be scheduled by the therapist or program manager and they take place during the normal business hours of 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM.

4. Any visitation by a person under the age of 16 must be approved and scheduled by the patient's therapist and conducted during regular business hours. Such visits must be therapeutic in nature and attended by the therapist or Program Director in the therapist's absence.
 5. Visitors are educated about items considered unsafe for the unit.
 - a. Hospital is not responsible for visitor's personal items and advise that all purses, wallets, cellphones, etc. be left in vehicle. Lockers are provided on the unit to secure car keys.
- ii. Hours are limited to maximize patient safety and therapeutic intervention to:
1. CHI SVI:
 - a Tuesday and Thursday evenings: 7:30 – 8:30 PM
 - b Saturday and Sunday evenings: 3:00 – 4 :00 PM
 - 2 CHI SVHS:
 - a Monday- Friday: 1:00- 2:30 PM
- C. Emergency Department:
- i. In critical situations, visitors may be kept out of the ED by a joint decision through collaboration between the ED charge nurse and the ED physician. ii. In the event of a gunshot wound (GSW) or stabbing victim brought to the ED, no visitors will be allowed in the department until law enforcement declares it is safe. E. PACU:
 - i. Due to the nature of the PACU and its varying degrees of activity, visitors in the PACU are generally discouraged.
 - ii. Visitors (this includes employees of the hospital) are allowed only in extreme circumstances.
 1. Based on the surgeon and anesthesiologist's request.
 2. At the discretion of the PACU nurse.
 - iii. A parent of young children may be allowed in PACU for comfort during the recovery phase, at the discretion of the PACU RN.
 - iv. In the circumstances that visiting is permitted, five (5) minutes is the maximum length of stay in the PACU.

SOURCE:

CMS Standard CAH CoP 482.13 "Patient Visitation Rights". December, 2011.

The Joint Commission chapter RI.01.01.01. The Hospital Respects, protects and promotes patient rights. 2023 TJC Standards manual.



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