

GREENVILLE HEALTH SYSTEM  
MANUAL OF POLICY DIRECTIVES

POLICY: S-050-40

TITLE: Visitors Policy

DATE: January 10, 2011 (Revised)

- I. Purpose. Greenville Health System welcomes patient families and visitors as an integral part of the healing process, and has established visiting guidelines to assure an environment that facilitates quality care, patient privacy, support and comfort, and a quiet and safe environment for all. GHS will not restrict, limit or otherwise deny visitation privileges on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, physical, mental or other disability, medical condition, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, ancestry, marital status, citizenship, status as a veteran, or other non-medically relevant factors.
- II. GHS values the rights of patients to instruct the hospital as to wanted visitors, and to protect patients from unwanted visitors.
- III. Definitions
  - A. A Care Partner is an individual selected by the patient who is 18 or older and who is there to support the patient during the course of the patient's hospital stay. The designation of the Care Partner may be an oral designation by the patient. The Care Partner may exercise the patient's visitation rights on his/her behalf in the event the patient is unable to do so.
- IV. Visiting Hours
  - A. General visiting times are 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. However, certain nursing areas have special visiting times.
  - B. The Care Partner will be allowed to visit at all times (unless patient desires otherwise) and will have a badge to facilitate 24 hour visitation. Other visitors should observe the 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. visiting times.
  - C. Patients are encouraged to determine who they would like to visit. Patients will be provided with visitation signs designating the allowed visitor, or no visitors, to post as desired. All visitors will enjoy full and equal visitation privileges consistent with patient preferences.
  - D. Clinicians caring for patients may need to restrict the number and frequency of visitors when visitation would interfere with the care of the patient and/or the care of other patients. The reasons for any restrictions should be clearly communicated to the patient and/or Care Partner.

- E. Clinicians may ask visitors to leave the room during the performance of a procedure. However, GHS will, if the clinical situation allows, and at the request of the patient, allow one visitor to remain in the room during a procedure in order to provide comfort and support to the patient.
  - F. Disruptive visitors may be asked to leave the room, unit and/or facility.
- V. Children Visitors
- A. At the Greenville Memorial campus, the Child Life Department shall be available to provide support to parents and their children to prepare for patient visits that might be particularly stressful to children.
  - B. An adult, other than the patient, should accompany children at all times.
- VI. Infection Control
- A. A person exhibiting any of the following symptoms should not visit until symptoms are gone: runny nose, cough, sore throat, sneezing, cold, flu, measles, mumps, rashes, draining wound, fever greater than 100.40, vomiting, and diarrhea.
  - B. Visitors with airborne/droplet transmitted (e.g., influenza, TB, chickenpox) communicable diseases or any other condition as recommended by the Infection Control Department (e.g., lice, scabies) should not be permitted to visit.
  - C. Visitors are encouraged to utilize the checklist included in the General Visitation Information brochure to determine the appropriateness of visits.
  - D. As appropriate, nursing staff will provide directions to visitors regarding special precautions including hand cleaning and the use of personal protective equipment, e.g. gloves, gowns, and masks.
  - E. During high levels of community illness, the Hospital System Epidemiologist or his/her designee has the authority to restrict community visitation to prevent further transmission within a GHS facility.
  - F. Visitors must wear appropriate footwear and attire while in a GHS facility.
- VII. Late Visiting and Overnight Stays
- A. All Greenville Health System facilities will be secured between 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. All visitors, patients and staff must enter through controlled access points during these times.
  - B. All persons (visitors, including clergy, physicians, employees) should display a hospital approved visitor badge between the hours of 9:00 p.m.

and 6:00 a.m. Late night visitors may be photographed according to security guidelines.

- C. Visitors arriving to visit after 9:00 p.m. without a Care Partner badge will be stopped by the security officer or GHS police officer on duty at the after-hours entrance.
- D. Visitation in exceptional situations (e.g. critical care or Labor and Delivery admissions, critical patient condition, out-of-town visitors) should be reviewed for appropriateness and all approved visitors allowed to proceed to the patient care area after signing in at the security post and receiving a temporary visitor badge. In such a case, when an exception to the policy is allowed, the Administrative Supervisor and/or the Administrator on Call should be notified.
- E. One Care Partner per patient is permitted to stay overnight. Two Care Partners per patient are permitted overnight stays in critical care areas and pediatrics.

#### VIII. Staff Responsibilities

- A. Staff members should respect the privacy of fellow employees who are hospitalized by observing all visitation guidelines.
- B. Staff members should communicate to the patient the reasons for any limitation or restriction of the patient's visitation rights.

#### IX. Communication

- A. The visitor policy should be explained to each patient upon admission by Admitting personnel or nursing staff.
- B. A General Visitation Information brochure should be distributed to all patients and will also be available in waiting rooms and reception desks. Information related to critical care or specialty areas will be distributed as pertinent.
- C. Information regarding visitation at Greenville Health System facilities, including alternatives to visitation, will be available to the general public and employees.
- D. This policy will be administered using Patient and Family Centered Care philosophy, Greenville Health System's Stellar Service Standards, and with sufficient flexibility to meet the needs of the patients and their families.