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Owner Darlene Schaefer:
Infection Prevention RN
Area Infection Prevention

Cottage Hospital Visitor Policy

Affected Departments:

Hospital Wide

POLICY:

Cottage Hospital encourages and supports active involvement of families and significant others in the plan of care. To keep patients, visitors, and staff safe and healthy, Cottage Hospital is taking additional measures to prevent the spread of infection within the hospital, medical offices, and the community.

Cottage Hospital is dedicated to providing a safe workplace for staff, patients and the community. Employees have a right to a safe workplace that is free of violence or aggression. Violence, abuse and disrespect to staff will not be tolerated.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to facilitate safe visitation practices. The process may vary by department and will need to consider individual circumstances.

PROCEDURE:

Visitors will be welcome to Cottage Hospital and will be expected to follow the outlined standards below.

To help protect our patients and staff, visitors are expected to follow all infection prevention mandates in place at the time of visit, and adhere to our violence free workplace policy.

Upon arrival to Cottage Hospital all visitors will check and be screened at the Welcome Desk at the main entrance. They will be asked screening questions and given instruction on how to proceed. Visitation

will not be allowed in if the following apply, visitors for patients who are positive COVID, or with a pending COVID test and with COVID symptoms and risks, except in certain circumstances.

Visitation to units or with specific patients is at the discretion of the hospital. There may be circumstances where visitation is shorted, limited or suspended for the safety and welfare of patients, staff and visitors. If a visitor does not comply with Cottage Hospital policy regarding code of conduct staff may request that they end their visitation for a set period of time.

Cottage Hospital complies with all current regulations and recommendations put out by CMS, CDC and State of New Hampshire HB 1439, to provide opportunity for all patients to have visitors. Per regulations there are times a facility may establish visitation policies that restrict visitation such as:

- (a) The presence of visitors would be medically or therapeutically contraindicated in the best clinical judgment of health care professionals;
- (b) The presence of visitors would interfere with the care of or rights of any patient;
- (c) Visitors are engaging in disruptive, threatening or violent behavior toward any staff member, patient or other visitor; or
- (d) Visitors are noncompliant with hospital policy.

Medical-Surgical/ICU: 1-2 visitors at a time per patient (Pediatric patients can have two visitors). For dual occupancy rooms, visitor presence will be dependent on the space available and the needs and preference of both patients. Additional visitors may be allowed for special circumstances.

Outpatient Surgical Patients: are allowed one (1) adult visitor for assistance with them prior to and after procedure. During procedures visitor may leave and will be notified when patient is ready for pick-up or they may wait in waiting room.

PACU (post anesthesia care unit) Visitors, family and friends will not be routinely admitted in the PACU, except when the patient's condition warrants. Following comprehensive assessment of the patient, determination of appropriateness of visitation is made. On such an occasion, the patient's family as defined by the patient, may be permitted to see the patient for a few minutes, if the situation allows. Consideration must be made for total PACU activity. It is recommended that no more than two people be allowed to visit at a time.

- In the situation of anxious relatives when a patient is staying in the PACU for an extended period of time communication will be made to those waiting. If indicated, notify the Director of Perioperative Services, when such a situation occurs.
- PACU personnel are responsible for following the PACU visitor policy. Nursing judgment must be used in determining if the situation is conducive to having visitors in the unit.
- Any difficulties will be referred to the Director of Surgical Services.

Emergency Department (ED) Patients: who are under 18 years of age permitted (2) parental visitors. Adult patients are permitted one (1) adult visitor.

Ray of Hope: Please call ahead 603-747-9200. As often as possible, visits on the Ray of Hope will be conducted in the outdoor seating area as weather permits or in resident's room. Visitors can not be in common areas. Due to the nature of the Ray of Hope unit, visitation levels may change to protect our patients.

Outpatient Radiology or Diagnostic Imaging Patients, Laboratory Patients, Outpatient Clinics and RHC: should have no more than 2 visitors in waiting areas. Patients who are under the age of 18, or requires a caregiver due to developmental disabilities, cognitive illnesses or physical limitations requiring assistance, may be accompanied into exam or treatment rooms.

Visitation for patients in end-of-life care: Three visitors will be welcomed when a patient transitions to comfort measures. If the patient is Covid positive education will be provided to visitor on use of personal protective equipment and hygiene reminders.

Family meetings: For family meetings two to three family members (as designated by the patient) may attend. When applicable, one of the attendees should be the surrogate decision maker or Designated Power of Attorney (DPOA), and one additional person to support the DPOA, both of whom may attend in person. Remaining interested family members should be present by phone.

Visitor Responsibility

- When necessary visitors will be screened upon to entering the building, any one with symptoms of illness will not be able visit.
- Visitors should be healthy or may be asked to leave. During periods of influenza or other highly contagious situations, visitation may be limited as determined by Infection Prevention and Administration
- Visitors must comply with all hospital-initiated requests for the use of personal protective equipment. Disregard for these protective measures may result in termination of visit
- Visitors must remain in the patient room during visitation unless they are using the restrooms, visiting in the solarium or using the Cottage Café.
- Visitors need to dress appropriately to include wearing a shirt and shoes.
- Request for people to wait outside in vehicles or alternative locations may occur if room/ waiting areas are crowded.
- Please respect the privacy and dignity of co-habitated rooms (Nurses please talk to your patients about visitation, setting clear expectations to assure a safe and accommodated visit)
- Permission for visitors may be granted at the discretion of our clinical care teams under specific and predefined circumstances that are related to patient care needs
- All units will accommodate and facilitate phone, Zoom and Face Time visits to allow for alternative means of communication
- Hospitals can revoke visitation rights when the security and /or safety of staff, patients or visitors may be at risk; patient care may be compromised; or a busy environment is not conducive to them.
- Children may visit but must stay with parent(s) at all times in waiting areas or in rooms. If in shared rooms children must stay on the side they are visiting.

Reference:

HB1439- [https://legiscan.com/NH/text/HB1439/id/2461935/
New_Hampshire-2022-HB1439-Introduced.html](https://legiscan.com/NH/text/HB1439/id/2461935/New_Hampshire-2022-HB1439-Introduced.html)

Approval Signatures

Step Description	Approver	Date
Final prior review	Natalie Kennett: CNO	01/2023
Final prior review	Kelly Hussey: Director Quality/ Risk	01/2023
Prior Policy Review	Darlene Schaefer: Infection Prevention RN	01/2023

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