



VISITING DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Approved by: Incident Command Team	Effective Date: April 11, 2020	CPR-131
Issued By: Administration	Review Date: Oct 28, 2020	
Department(s) All	Version: 4	Archived: Y

At LACGH, it is critical that we keep our patients, staff and hospital environment safe. We must all do our part to stop the spread of COVID-19. We are taking additional precautions to keep patients, families, and staff safe including temporary changes to our Visitor Policy. We recognize the importance of family/caregiver support when patients are in hospital and will make every effort to ensure that the needs of patients and families are met while these temporary measures including the use virtual technology to support connecting patients to their loved ones whenever possible.

On May 26th, 2020 the Ministry of Health provided direction to Health Care Providers (Regulated Health Professionals who operate a Group Practice of Regulated Health Professionals) as part of the evolving response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The document provides operational details and requirements as referenced in [Directive #2](#)

While this document aims to provide clarity for visitation and family/support presence during COVID-19, decisions related to application of this guidance in specific circumstances rest with the clinical leadership and organizational risk assessment.

POLICY

The access of an essential visitor to the Hospital is be determined by the circumstances surrounding the individual patient and the contextual considerations of the hospital and the pandemic. Essential visitors are categorized in distinct populations with distinct visiting guidance for access (Appendix A).

Essential visitors must:

- Screen negative for COVID-19 screening protocol at the main entrance to the hospital and essential visitors who screen positive will not be allowed to visit; and,
- Wear masks or other personal protective equipment and perform hand hygiene as directed by the entrance screening desk or clinical unit
- The term “Essential Visitor” is synonymous with Designated Care Partners (DCP). Essential visitors (care partner) are those allowed access to the hospital in situations based on compassionate care; visits that are paramount to the patient’s/client’s fundamental care needs, mental health and emotional support; enable processes of care and patient flow; and discharge from the hospital. Essential visitors are designated and alternate care partners that are any support person defined by the patient or resident as family, including friends, neighbours, substitute decision makers, privately paid worker and/or relatives that advocate for a loved one’s needs and support them in managing their health, healthcare, long-term care and overall well-being. In the case of those patients who are not able to participate in decision making the substitute decision maker and/or power of attorney will serve as the designated caregiver and/or determine who the designated and alternative care partner is. Examples include individuals who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to provide their own medical history and/or make decisions for themselves, those who react to a medical environment with heightened emotionality and are unable to be calmed without medication or restraint, and once-in-a-lifetime events like childbirth or end-of-life.



VISITING DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Approved by: Incident Command Team	Effective Date: April 11, 2020	CPR-131
Issued By: Administration	Review Date: Oct 28, 2020	
Department(s) All	Version: 4	Archived: Y

Visitor Restriction Protocols:

General public visitation is not allowed for patients. Essential Visitor guidelines are defined in Appendix A.

Risk Mitigation procedures will be followed for essential visitation.

- Regional screening recommendations on entry including pre-screening and masking will be followed. Information about visitors is logged and centralized to support tracking as needed.
- Essential visitors will be advised to follow hand hygiene and physical distancing guidelines.
- Designated paths will be used to limit movement within the hospital and should be kept to only the patient’s room or designated visiting space where physical distancing is possible.
- Outpatient clinics and Inpatient Units will proactively communicate with patients / families / caregiver(s) for planned visits whenever possible, notifying them of visitation restrictions in effect.
- If care partners explicitly ignore or defy the Public Health requirements during their time at the hospital, they should be asked to leave. This will be at the discretion of the healthcare provider and/or healthcare leader.
- Specific to, Inpatient Essential Visitors:
 - A Caregiver ID badge (or sticker) will be provided to support visual management and indication of passed screening. The DCP must present their card at each visit.
- Specific to, End-of-Life Patients:
 - For COVID-19 positive end-of-life patients, essential visitors will be advised to follow hand hygiene and physical distancing guidelines and will be provided droplet precaution PPE to wear while they visit, as long as sufficient supplies of PPE exist. This will be reviewed regularly with the care team.
- This policy will be regularly reviewed to ensure it always maintains a balance between protection of staff/patient safety and the psychosocial needs of patients/families.

Virtual Visiting/Staying Connected

Virtual care and virtual care partner connection will be offered to all patients and care partners, regardless of whether care partners are at the bedside, or accompanying a family member. The option to have additional family members connected virtually should still be offered.

Virtual Visits

Virtual visits will be encouraged using either the patients’ own technology device or via a tablet provided by the hospital. (Care team staff: please refer to the IT department for these patients who are identified to have this need).

Patients can connect to the free **LAC Public Wi-Fi** and use video apps such as FaceTime, Messenger and Zoom without using up their data plan. If a patient does not have a device, we are happy to arrange a Virtual Visit (video chat). These can be facilitated by either requesting a Virtual Visit appointment via email: VirtualVisits@lacgh.napanee.on.ca or speaking with the care team staff.



VISITING DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Approved by: Incident Command Team	Effective Date: April 11, 2020	CPR-131
Issued By: Administration	Review Date: Oct 28, 2020	
Department(s) All	Version: 4	Archived: Y

Send an E- Postcard Message

If a patient doesn't have their own email account and family/friends would like to send them a message, they can send an 'e-postcard' to us though the Hospital's website and we will deliver it.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:

<https://www.oha.com/Documents/Care%20Partner%20Presence%20Policies%20During%20COVID-19.pdf>

<https://changeofoundation.ca/caregiver-id/>

VISITING DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Approved by: Incident Command Team

Effective Date: April 11, 2020

CPR-131

Issued By: Administration

Review Date: Oct 28, 2020

Department(s) All

Version: 4

Archived: Y

APPENDIX A – ESSENTIAL VISITOR GUIDELINES

CATEGORY	CLINICAL TEAM GUIDANCE	GUIDANCE
End-of-Life	Risk of dying in the next two weeks	2 visitors concurrently
Actively Dying	Death is imminent/MAID	As determined by the family and care team
Patient requiring visitor for safety reasons	Visitor required to avoid significant physical, emotional or heightened emotional response	1 designated visitor per day.
Family Caregiver for long stay patients	Hospital length of stay greater than 30 days	1 designated visitor per day
Patients requiring transition of care support	Coordination of care; e.g. home care, follow up instructions	1 designated visitor to assist with planning
Outpatient (Clinic, DI, ER)	Time dependant need for essential care partners to support clinical team with timely assessment (History, symptoms), obtaining consent to plans of care (Diagnostics, treatment and discharge planning / follow up	Time limited visitor, as requested by the patient or the care team
Under 18 years old	Care by parent	1 designated visitor
Patients with Vulnerabilities	Examples: cognitive/intellectual impairment, dementia, severe brain injury, severe stroke, language barrier that cannot be addressed by translator service Designated care partner Someone who is or may be for any reason unable to protect and take care of themselves against significant harm or exploitation	1 designated visitor per day
Devastating Diagnosis	Care team needs to communicate a serious diagnosis to the patient	Up to 2 visitors, as determined by the patient
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For contact tracing purposes, all visitors must sign in when screened, providing name and telephone number. • Designated visitors are as defined by the patient and/or family. There is no restriction to the number of designated visitors on any one list. However, in person visitation is limited to one person per day. • All visitors must pass COVID screening and must wear a mask at all times and cannot wander throughout the facility. • This policy does not apply to LTC, please refer to LTC specific visitation policy. • Spiritual care practitioners are considered part of the circle of care. • ** Visitation may be restricted further on short notice based on local and regional COVID – 19 activity. 		