

GEORGE E WEEMS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL- WEEMS MEDICAL CENTERS- FRANKLIN COUNTY EMS
POLICY - PROCEDURE

Subject: Visitation & Mask Policy Policy No: 2022 - 0013	Governing Board Approval	
Department(s): ALL Departments	Administration Approval	
Original Date:	Medical Staff Approval, if applicable	
Revision Dates:	Department Approval	
Replaces Policy No / Name (if applicable)		Previous Visitation and Masking Policy

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Date updated: May 19, 2022

Visitation and Mask Policy

I. POLICY

At Weems Memorial Hospital (WMH), it is our desire to create an environment that fosters supportive patient- and family-centered care, positive health outcomes, the safety and security of patients, their families, guests, our colleagues, and community while promoting a healing environment for our patients. We recognize having care partners and family support is vital to the healing process. We encourage family and guests to visit patients, subject to patient and family preference and in accordance with the guidelines described below.

II. DEFINITIONS

- a. **“Close Contact”** is someone who is less than 6 feet away from a patient for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. For example, two individual 10-minute exposures with a 24-hour period are 20 minutes. Note: Colleagues are deemed to be in “close contact” with a patient when they enter a patient room and when engaging in direct patient care activities.
- b. **“CDC Guidelines”** means applicable guidance for healthcare settings published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- c. **“Family”** is a group of individuals with a continuing legal, genetic and/or emotional relationship with the patient including but not limited to a spouse, domestic partner (including same sex partner), children, parents, siblings, grandparents, other family member or family friend. Patients define their “family” or “essential caregiver” and how they will be involved in care, care planning and decision-making. WMH respects and values family as integral partners in providing excellent care.
- d. **“Guest”** is a visitor of the patient or family.

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- e. **“Mask”** is defined as surgical mask, KN95, N95 or H600 when providing direct patient care.

III. GENERAL

- a. COVID-19 positive patients under isolation status are not allowed visitors. Exceptions will be made for patients who are underage, at end of life or have extenuating circumstances.
- b. The number of people welcomed at the bedside at any one time will be determined in collaboration with the patient, family, and the nursing team.
- c. In situations where there are shared rooms, this decision will include input from both patients and their families. To ensure safety, considerations will also be given to the physical limitation of the space.
- d. The patient has the right to receive Family members and Guests whom they designate and may withdraw or deny such consent at any time.
- e. Family members and Guests will not be restricted based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability.
- f. Family members and Guests who are feeling unwell, have an infection or have symptoms of respiratory illness or flu-like illnesses should not visit patients in the hospital. In this instance, the nursing team may support family presence through other means using available technology (e.g. telephone, cell phone, internet video call).
- g. For the safety of our patients, Family members and Guests are required to perform hand hygiene with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub upon entering and leaving the patient’s room.
- h. Children (i.e. <12 years) supervised by an adult may visit patients in the Hospital (unless Visitation and Mask Response Level is “High”.)
- i. There may be interruptions to Family member and Guest presence to protect the privacy rights of other patients or to maintain safety and security.
- j. We will continue to review our COVID policies and protocols and will ease or tighten them in the days and weeks ahead based on the latest CDC community data and guidance.

IV. PROCEDURE

a. VISITING HOURS

1. Hospital: Family members and Guests are welcome between the hours of 7 am and 9 pm, according to patient/family preference.
 - a. Exceptions will be made for end-of-life situations.

b. VISITATION

Weems Memorial Hospital monitors local indicators and data from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention's (CDC) "COVID-19 Community Levels" to determine the prevalence of COVID-19. Using this data and applying CDC Guidelines for healthcare settings, Weems will assign a Visitation and Masking Response Level which defines family and guest access and masking requirements in the hospital. The level will be updated periodically as the data are revised. Levels will be posted at the following location areas: Hospital (Emergency Department, front lobby areas, and bulletin board by the cafeteria), Rural Health Clinics (West Reception & East Reception Areas) and EMS (Apalachicola, Eastpoint & Carrabelle living room areas).

Here is a guide to each level and how it will impact the mask and visitor policies.

"High"

- Visitation is limited to one person (either Family member or Guest) at a time.
- A hospital inpatient may have one visitor stay overnight if the visitor is checked in through the screening process before 9 pm. The visitor cannot leave during the night and return. If the visitor chooses to leave, they cannot return until visiting hours begin again at 7 am. Exceptions will be addressed on a case-by-case basis (including end-of-life, specific care givers and special needs).
- A sitter hired by the patient or patient's family is not deemed a visitor, but part of the care provider team serving the patient.
- A member of clergy or a religious leader may visit a patient in addition to one visitor per day.
- No visitors under age 16, barring extenuating circumstances.

"Medium"

- There are no limitations on the number of visitors with the following exceptions.

"Low"

- There are no limitations on the number of visitors.

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c. MASKING REQUIREMENTS

HIGH

Colleagues, Family members, Guests and Visitors are required to wear masks in all Weems healthcare facilities and settings.

MEDIUM

HOSPITAL, RURAL HEALTH CLINICS & EMS: Colleagues, Family members, Guests and Visitors must practice masking as outlined below.

Mask Required	
When colleagues and providers are providing direct patient care or transporting patients.	Examples: Patient rooms, all procedure rooms, when transporting patients, caring for immunocompromised patient.
Public Spaces	Examples: Waiting rooms, lobbies, hallways.
Upon patient request	
If you have cold-like symptoms	
Personal Choice to Wear a Mask	
Meeting Areas	Examples: Colleagues' offices, conference rooms, cafeteria.
Non-Patient Care Areas	Examples: Any area not frequented by patients.
Seated at a table eating	

LOW

Weems Memorial Hospital will continue standard precautions for all patients.

HOSPITAL AND RURAL HEALTH CLINICS: Colleagues, Family members, Guests and Visitors must practice masking as outlined below.

Mask Required	
When colleagues and providers are providing direct patient care or transporting patients.	Examples: Patient rooms, all procedure rooms, when transporting patients, caring for immunocompromised patient.
Upon patient request	
If you have cold-like symptoms	
Personal Choice to Wear a Mask	
Public Spaces	Examples: Waiting rooms, lobbies, hallways.
Meeting Areas	Examples: Colleagues' offices, conference rooms, cafeteria.
Non-Patient Care Areas	Examples: Any area not frequented by patients.
Seated at a table eating	

V. RESPONSIBILITIES

Supervisors are responsible for assuring that this Policy is disseminated to their staff to ensure they are complying with this policy.