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Owner: *Todd Flosi, MD: Chief Medical Officer, VCMC & SPH*
Policy Area: COVID-19
References:

Visitation During COVID-19 Pandemic

Guideline

In keeping with recommendations from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Ventura County Medical Center, Santa Paula Hospital, and Ambulatory Care Clinics are limiting visitors for patients during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. We encourage patients to keep in contact with their loved ones through virtual means, including video and/or phone communication. Staff will assist patient if needed. Given the emergence of more transmissible variants of SARS-CoV-2 despite progress of COVID-19 vaccination, we will allow COVID-19 negative inpatients to have two visitors from the same household at the same time as long as visitors demonstrate proof of COVID-19 vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test in the 72 hours prior to each visitation. Unvaccinated visitors returning from international travel should quarantine and not visit the hospital until quarantine is complete; fully vaccinated visitors do not need to quarantine after travel.

Procedure

General Visitation Process

Visitors are required to wear an approved face covering at all times when in the Hospitals.

Visitors are restricted to patient rooms, and should only be in the lobby, waiting areas, common spaces as they move to and from the room they are visiting.

Visitors may go to cafeteria, but should be encouraged to bring food back to the room they are visiting. A guest tray may be ordered for visitors of known or suspected COVID-19 positive patients.

Visitors should be encouraged to use the bathroom within the patient room. If the patient room does not have a bathroom, visitor should be directed to the public restroom designated for visitors within the unit.

Visitors should maintain physical distancing from other visitors not from the same household as well as from the facility health care personnel at all times.

Visiting Patients who are Physically Located in the Emergency Department (both outpatients and inpatients)

- A. No visitors will be allowed for patients who are physically in the Emergency Department except as follows:
 1. The following types of patients are allowed 1 visitor, provided the visitor does not have signs or symptoms consistent with SARS-CoV-2 infection and is compliant with the requirement to wear a

face covering at all times:

- a. Patients <18 years of age
- b. Pregnant patients
- c. Patients at the end of life
- d. Patients for whom a support person(s) is(are) medically necessary, including those with physical, intellectual and / or developmental disabilities and patients with cognitive impairment

B. Exceptions to this policy will be at the discretion of the nursing supervisor

Visiting COVID-Negative Patients

A. All COVID-negative inpatients may have up to two visitors from the same household at the same time, provided that each visitor demonstrates proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test in the 72 hours prior to each visitation

B. The following groups are allowed 2 visitors not necessarily from the same household at the same time, provided that each visitor demonstrates proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test in the 72 hours prior to each visitation:

1. Hospitalized children (PEDS, PICU, NICU)
2. Women in labor (a doula is considered a part of the health care team, and does not constitute one of the two visitors allowed to a laboring woman)
3. Patients at the end of life
4. Patients for whom a support person(s) is(are) medically necessary, including those with physical, intellectual and / or developmental disabilities and patients with cognitive impairment
5. Dependent young adult patient < 25 years of age, if patient requests it
6. Patients undergoing surgery

Visiting COVID-positive patients

A. Patients with known or suspected SARS-CoV-2 infection who are in the following categories are allowed one visitor:

1. Hospitalized children (PEDS, PICU, NICU)
2. Women in labor
3. Patients at the end of life
4. Patients for whom a support person(s) is(are) medically necessary, including those with physical, intellectual and / or developmental disabilities and patients with cognitive impairment
5. Dependent young adult patient < 25 years of age, if patient requests it

B. Visitors of COVID-19 positive patients will be asked to wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) while in the patient's room, including: gown, gloves, eye protection, and a mask.

1. The mask worn by a visitor may be an N95 respirator, a powered air purifying respirator (PAPR), or a 3M 6800, as appropriate.
2. Physicians should document that they have discussed the potential risk of infection associated with visitation, and that visitor(s) has acknowledged that risk, and have chosen to proceed with visitation.

C. Visitors to patients who have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 but are beyond the need for transmission

based precautions should still be offered PPE. The physician should document in the patient's medical record conversations with the visitor regarding risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection from in-room visitation

- D. Visitors who themselves have previously tested positive for SARS-CoV-2, and have been cleared by public health to be beyond the need for transmission based precautions (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-hospitalized-patients.html>) may be allowed in the patient's room. However, given potential risk of SARS-CoV-2 reinfection, we recommend that the visitor wear PPE (as above).
1. In addition, the physician should document in the patient's medical record conversations with the visitor regarding risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection from in-room visitation.

Patients in Critical Condition or Obtaining Treatment in an Emergent Situation

- A. Visitors who are visiting a patient in critical condition, where death may be imminent, are exempt from the vaccination and testing requirements; however, these visitors must comply with all infection control and prevention requirements applicable to indoor visits.
- B. The following visitors are initially exempt from vaccination and testing requirements over the course of an emergent situation:
1. Parents of hospitalized children (PEDS, PICU, NICU)
 2. Support person of woman in labor
 3. Support person(s) for patients with physical, intellectual and / or developmental disabilities, and patients with cognitive impairment
- C. For subsequent visits following the emergent situation and as soon as reasonably possible, these visitors must comply with the vaccine verification or applicable testing requirements.

Screening

- A. All visitors must check-in at a point of entry and participate in a mandatory COVID-19 screening.
1. Visitors with signs or symptoms suggestive of COVID-19, or a temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit and higher will not be allowed to enter
 2. Visitors who test positive for COVID-19 should not be permitted to visit or should be asked to leave
 3. VCMC and SPH are practicing universal masking during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is expected that the visitor will keep his or her face covered during the duration of his or her visit, whether inside or outside the patient's room.
 4. Visitors who have successfully completed the COVID-19 screening and have met complete vaccination or negative COVID-19 test criteria, or are exempt (as noted above), should proceed directly to their destination.
 5. No visitors under the age of 18 shall be allowed unless they are parents of hospitalized children, or the significant other of a laboring woman
 6. Service animals will continue to be allowed entrance

Ambulatory Care Clinics

- A. Ambulatory Care Clinics have a "no visitor" policy during the COVID-19 pandemic. Exceptions will be made for minors and those who require a caregivers assistance.
- B. All other exceptions will need approval from the clinic manager, and only to facilitate the understanding and coordination of care for complex medical diagnoses.

Students Obtaining Clinical Experience

Ventura County Health Care Agency supports efforts to ensure that new nurses and other professionals coming into the healthcare workforce are able to obtain necessary clinical experience.

Students obtaining their clinical experience will be permitted to enter the facility if they meet the Centers for Disease Control and California Department of Public Health guidelines for healthcare workers to maintain the workforce needed during this pandemic.

Students will need to comply with the State Public Health Officer Order of 8/5/2021 as follows:

1. Have either documented proof of SARS-CoV-2 vaccination, or
2. Twice weekly negative SARS-CoV-2 testing.

Whenever possible, students will not be assigned to care for persons known or suspected of having SARS-CoV-2 infection (COVID-19).

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Attachments

[Visitation During COVID-19 Pandemic Patient Handout \(English & Spanish\)](#)

Approval Signatures

Step Description	Approver	Date
PolicyStat Administrator	Candi Morimune: Clinical Nurse Manager, QAPI	9/9/2021
Policy Owner	Todd Flosi, MD: Chief Medical Officer, VCMC & SPH	9/9/2021