VISITATION POLICY

Purpose:
The purpose of this policy is to create an environment, which provides patient and visitor privacy and which provides a safe and secure environment for visitor, employee, and patient protection.

The policy objectives are to establish general Hospital and specific Nursing Unit visiting hours; to identify a visitor age restriction; to specify restricted areas of the Hospital to which visitors will be denied access; to identify Nursing and staff involvement

Policy:
The Health Sciences Center recognizes the importance and the rights of patients to have visitors while at the facility. In addition, it is also necessary to provide a safe, healthy environment through the control of visitor traffic. LSUHSC-S will not restrict, limit or otherwise deny visitation privileges on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.

The patient has the right to determine who may and may not visit them regardless of whether the visitor is legally related to the patient. The patient will be informed of their visitation rights in the patient handbook.

LSUHSC-S will work with the patient (or support person) to ensure that all visitors designated by the patient (or support person) enjoy visitation privileges that are no more restrictive than those that immediate family would enjoy.

Definitions:
Justified Clinical Restrictions: means any clinically necessary or reasonable restriction or limitation imposed by the Hospital on a patient’s visitation rights which restriction or limitation is necessary to provide safe care to patient or other patients. A Justified Clinical Restriction may include, but need not be limited to one or more of the following: (i) a court order limiting or restraining contact; (ii) behavior presenting a direct risk or threat to the patient, hospital staff, or others in the immediate environment; (iii) behavior disruptive of the functioning of the patient care unit; (iv) reasonable limitations on the number of visitors at any one time; (v) patient’s risk of infection by the visitor; (vi) visitor’s risk of infection by the patient; (vii) extraordinary protections because of a pandemic or infectious disease outbreak; (viii) substance abuse treatment protocols requiring restricted visitation; (ix) patient’s need for privacy or rest; (x) need for privacy or rest by another individual in the patient’s shared room; or (xi) when patient is undergoing a clinical intervention or procedure and the treating health care professional believes it is in the patient’s best interest to limit visitation during the clinical intervention or procedure.

Patient: means anyone admitted to the hospital as an inpatient of the hospital.

Support Person: means a family member, friend or other individual who is at the hospital to support the patient during the course of the patient’s stay at the hospital and may exercise the
patient’s visitation rights on patient’s behalf if patient is unable to do so. Such individual may but need not be an individual legally responsible for making medical decisions on the patient’s behalf.

Procedure:
This policy will be monitored and enforced primarily by the Nursing staff, with active support by the University Police Department.

A. General Visitation
6:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Due to the size of patient rooms one (1) responsible person and eighteen (18) years or older will be allowed with each patient beyond visiting hours. Children (under the age of 16) visiting patient care areas must be accompanied by an adult at all times.

B. Family is allowed in the Waiting Areas at all times. No one under the age of 10 will be allowed in the unit unless authorized by the physician or nurse. Visiting privileges are subject to be canceled or delayed at the discretion of the nurse or physician. (For example: patient is undergoing care interventions, infection control issues, visitation may interfere with care of the patient or other patients).

C. Special Care Units
Due to the specific medical needs of the patients, level of care being provided and physical limitations, the following special care units have designated visitation hours and restrictions. (See individual unit policies for details):
- Adult and Pediatric ICUs
- Neonatal ICU
- Burn Unit
- Psychiatry
- General Pediatric
- Bone Marrow Transplant Unit

D. Emergency Department
1. Acute Emergency Department patients are allowed one (1) support person with them during the course of their stay. However, overall patient care needs and census of the ED may require restrictions. Visitation will remain flexible and at the discretion of the ED personnel based on the following:
   a. Visitor staying at bedside is a comfort to the patient.
   b. Visitor is not creating agitation/unrest for patient
   c. Visitor is remaining at patient’s bedside but looking outside of patient cubicle/room violating other patients privacy
   d. Visitor is not disrupting patient care
   e. Other patient privacy is not at risk due to emergent situations occurring in the ED
   f. Volume of patients in the Acute ED and critical condition of patients in Acute ED

2. Psychiatric Crisis Unit (Emergency Department Extension)
Due to the need of crisis stabilization of Emergency Psychiatric conditions as well as privacy concerns for other patients ten minute visits with one person, are generally permitted at the following times:
2-4 PM Daily
Flexible visitation schedules may be arranged with the charge nurse based on patient needs. For safety concerns visitors may be subject to contraband searches.

Visitations will be terminated, denied or delayed under the following conditions and at the discretion of the nurse or physician:

a. Children under 16 are not allowed to visit due to limited visitation space
b. The visitors presence causes agitation and/or aggression
c. The visitor is threatening, rowdy or intoxicated
d. The visitor is believed to be bringing in contraband onto the unit
e. The visitation is interfering with the treatment or care of the patient
f. Ongoing safety issues on the unit.

In the event that visitation is abruptly canceled due to ongoing safety issues, the visit may be rescheduled through the nurse for a later time (preferably 6:00pm-8:00pm).

E. Visitor Age Restriction

Children (under the age of 16) visiting patient care areas must be accompanied by an adult at all times. It is asked that the adult supervisor ensure that the visiting children do not disturb other patients. Any problems occurring with rowdiness of visiting children will be referred to UPD and they may ask the supervising adult to remove the children.

F. Isolation Patients

Visitors of patients in isolation must follow the instructions provided in Infection Control policies and by isolation signage. Visitors <12 years old may be restricted from visiting patients in isolation. For the safety of the patient and employees, visitors who fail to comply with isolation protocols may have visitation privileges revoked.

G. Prisoner Guarded Patients

All guarded prisoner-patients are denied visitors except terminal cases with special consideration as approved by the appropriate Agency Warden. Arrangements are made for visitation in these situations between the Warden and University Police.

H. Switchboard Responsibility

Switchboard Operators will announce the end of general visiting hours.

I. Grievance

If any patient of the hospital believes that his or her patient visitation rights have been violated, they may file a complaint using the hospital’s internal grievance system. During normal business hours a grievance may be filed by contacting Patient Relations, located I Hospital Administration; after hours, weekends and holidays the Administrative House Manager shall be contacted for grievance issues.

Department/Unit specific visitation policies may have additional procedures to follow.
Administrator

8/27/12
Date

Approved by Clinical Board: 5/15/01, 7/15/03, 6/20/06, 9/18/07, 8/21/12
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