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Visitor

Partners-in-Care (Visitors) Welcome Policy

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines that support and welcomes the presence and participation of family members and/or partners-in-care in the patient's care experience during their emergency room visit, hospital visit, or health care center visit. It is further the purpose of this policy to comply with all applicable state and federal laws.

II. SCOPE

Applies to North Brevard County Hospital District d/b/a Parrish Medical Center and its affiliates ("Parrish Healthcare")

III. POLICY STATEMENT

North Brevard County Hospital District d/b/a Parrish Medical Center and its affiliates ("Parrish Healthcare") is committed to creating a healing environment supportive of in-person visits with patients as well as an environment supportive of a person-centered care approach resulting in positive health outcomes and the safety and security of patients, their families, visitors, our care partners (employees, medical staff, volunteers), and the community we serve. Parrish Healthcare recognizes that family members and/or partners-in-care play an important part in the patient's healing process. Family members and/or partners-in-care, according to patient preferences, are respected as essential members of the patient's health care team in sharing information and providing support and comfort during a patient's emergency room visit, hospital stay, or health care center visit. Family members and/or partners-in-care enhance quality and safety. Family members and/or partners-in-care provide pertinent information essential to the care plan and also provide essential information during a patient's time in our health care system as well as during a patient's transition to home or community care.

IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Patient** refers to any person seeking health care or actively receiving health care treatments, diagnostic tests, screenings, assessment, medications, or education from any entity related to Parrish Healthcare.
- B. **Family** as defined by the Institute for Patient and Family Centered Care, "family" refers to two or more persons who are related in any way – biologically, legally, or emotionally. Patients and families define their "family."
- C. **Health Surrogate** (via a Designation of Health Care Surrogate form) is authorized by the patient to make health care decisions and receive health care information on a patient's behalf if ever a patient is incapacitated or unable to make his/her own decisions.
- D. **Partner(s)-in-Care** are person(s) identified by the patient, who are family members and/or friends or other individuals that are present to support the patient during the course of the patient's health care experience and may exercise the visitation rights on the patient's behalf if a patient is unable to do so. A partner-in-care may be designated as an "essential caregiver" by the patient. The essential caregiver may provide emotional and/or social support and comfort according to the patient's preference. Such individual(s) may or may not be an individual legally responsible for making medical decisions on the patient's behalf.
- E. **Care Partner** Is an inclusive term referring to employees, medical staff members, volunteers, and Board of Directors members, as well as well as any person working for or on behalf of Parrish Medical Center or its affiliates, including but not limited to temporary personnel, consultants, and independent contractors, regardless of position.
- F. **Care Team (clinical)** a patient-centered model of care, emphasizing safety and efficiency that enable all members of the team caring for patients to offer individual expertise and contribute to patient care in a concerted fashion.
- G. **Interprofessional Care Team (non-clinical)** is a group of health care professionals from within their own profession and includes people from outside their profession, patients and/or their partner-in-care to bring together diverse knowledge, skills and perspectives to support the patient during the course of the patients' health care experience.
- H. **Parrish Healthcare** is an inclusive term referring to North Brevard County Hospital District d/b/ a Parrish Medical Center and its affiliates and North Brevard Medical Support, Inc. and its affiliates such as Parrish Medical Center, Parrish Medical Group, Parrish Health Network, The Children's Center, etc.

V. PARRISH MEDICAL CENTER PROCEDURES

- A. In general visitation will be allowed for all patients (adult and pediatric), including but not limited to the following circumstances:
 - 1. Hospitalizations;
 - 2. Emergency Department visit;
 - 3. End-of-life situations;
 - 4. Childbirth, including labor and delivery;

5. Patient is a pediatric patient;
6. Patient, who was living with family before being admitted, is struggling (as determined by the patient or health surrogate);
7. Patient is making one or more major medical decisions;
8. Patient is experiencing emotional distress or grieving the loss of a friend or family member who recently died (as determined by the patient or health surrogate);
9. Patient needs cueing or encouragement to eat or drink, which was previously provided by a family member or partner-in-care;
10. Patient, who used to talk freely and interact with others, is seldom speaking.

B. Visitor Screening Procedure

1. The following safety measures are in place to provide a safe and healing environment for all:
 - a. Public access is limited to the Main Entrance and the Emergency Department entrance. Security officers are posted at these entrances. Metal detection devices may be present. Weapons and/or firearms are not permitted.
 - b. Visitors/partners-in-care will be asked to check-in with a picture ID to receive a visitor's badge.
 - c. Visitors/partners-in-care will be verified with the receiving patient and/or partner-in-care or nursing team prior to access.
 - d. Visitors/partners-in-care who are experiencing cold, flu, or COVID-like symptoms are encouraged to refrain from visiting hospitalized patients to prevent the spread of potentially life-threatening illness to medically fragile persons. However, if you are experiencing cold, flu, or COVID-like symptoms face masks (to cover your cough/sneeze) and hand-sanitizing stations are available throughout the medical center for use to prevent the spread of potentially life-threatening illness to medically fragile persons.
 - e. Visitors/partners-in care will not be required to submit proof of vaccination or immunization status.
2. Patient and/or health care surrogate preference and patient wishes will be given priority as part of the visitor screening procedure.

C. In the unique event that visitor/partner-in-care presence would need to be restricted or limited to ensure safety or confidentiality, The patient's care team will work with the patient and his/her visitor(s)/partner(s)-in-care to continue the visit as soon as possible.

1. Examples for when visitor/partner-in-care presence may need to be restricted or limited include, but are not limited to, a court order limiting or restraining contact, behavior that is a direct threat to patients, visitors/partners-in-care, care partners, or others in the immediate environment, or behavior that is disruptive to the functioning of the care unit, or when required pursuant to our infection prevention and/or emergency management protocols.

- D. The number of visitors/partners-in-care welcomed at the bedside at one time during a hospital stay will be determined in collaboration with the patient and/or health surrogate, partner(s)-in-care, and the patient's care team. In situations where there are shared rooms, this determination will include the other patient and his or her partner(s)-in-care. To ensure safety, consideration will also be given to the physical limitations of the space.
- E. Consensual physical contact between a patient and his/her visitor/partner-in-care will be determined in collaboration with the patient and/or health surrogate, partner-in-care and the patient's care team. To ensure safety, consideration will also be given to the physical limitations of the space and the admitting diagnosis of the patient. Patient and/or health care surrogate preference and patient wishes will be given priority.
- F. Infection Prevention Considerations.
 - 1. Patients with an infectious disease as their admitting diagnosis shall be permitted in-person visitation in accordance with the medical center's infection prevention policies and procedures which may require the visitors/partners-in-care to wear appropriate personal protective equipment including but not limited to face mask, gown, and/or gloves during the visit.
- G. Alternative visitors (e.g. Pets and/or animal-assisted therapy) must be pre-arranged with the care team.
- H. Parrish Healthcare may, in its discretion, require visitors/partners-in-care to agree in writing to follow its policies and procedures. Parrish Healthcare may suspend in-person visitation of a specific visitor/partner-in-care if the visitor/partner-in-care (as determined by Parrish Healthcare) violates its policies and procedures.

VI. Hospital Visiting Hours

There are no specified visiting hours and no limit to the duration of the visit. However, in the hospital, quiet time has been designated for the hours of 8 PM until 7 AM every day to promote a restful healing environment for patients.

VII. Intensive Care Unit (ICU)

Visitors/partners-in-care shall be at least 16 years old. Exceptions for End of Life visitation may be made in consultation with the patient and/or health surrogate, partner-in-care and the patient's care team.

VIII. Parrish Healthcare (Outpatient) Centers

Patients and visitors to the outpatient care settings are not required to provide verification of vaccination or immunization status.

Patients or visitors who are experiencing cold, flu or COVID-19-like symptoms are encouraged, but not required, to wear a face mask (to cover your cough/sneeze) while in the centers to prevent the spread of illness. Face masks and hand-sanitizing stations are available throughout Parrish Healthcare Centers for use to prevent the spread of potentially life-threatening illness to medically fragile persons.

Security Screening may be required and metal detection devices may be present.

Weapons and/or fire arms are not permitted.

IX. WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION POLICY

Parrish Healthcare promotes a safe and healing environment and has a zero tolerance for any type of violence or aggressive behavior. This includes, but is not limited to: threats, harassment of any kind, physical abuse, assault or batter, abusive or foul language, theft or damage of our property. Criminal penalties will be pursued if/when necessary.

X. Responsible Person

Parrish Healthcare's Chief Nursing Officer is responsible for ensuring that all personnel adhere to the requirements of this policy, that these procedures are implemented and followed, and that instances of noncompliance with this policy are reported first through the chain of command and if unable to resolve by management reported through the Grievance Program, as outlined in Parrish Healthcare policy [Patient Complaint/Grievance Program](#).

Enforcement

All care partners whose responsibilities are affected by this policy are expected to be familiar with the basic procedures and responsibilities created by this policy. Failure to comply with this policy will be subject to appropriate performance management pursuant to all applicable policies and procedures, up to and including termination.

XI. REFERENCES

- A. [CMS regulations revising the Medicare Conditions of Participation as set forth at 42 CFR § 482.13\(h\)](#)
- B. www.shipmangoodwin.com/Sample_Hospital_Patient_Visitation_Policy (THE LANGUAGE IS NOT A PATIENT – AND FAMILY – CENTERED STATEMENT)
- C. Patient Rights and Responsibilities
- D. [The Joint Commission RI.01.01.01](#), EP 2, EP28
- E. Florida Statute Section 408.823
- F. Institute for Patient and Family-centered care (2011) Changing Hospital Visiting Policies and Practices: Supporting Family Presence and Participation. Bethesda, MD: Author.
- G. How-to Guide: Multidisciplinary Rounds. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Institute for Healthcare Improvement; February 2015. Accessed 2/28/2017 from www.ihl.org

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Approval Signatures

Step Description	Approver	Date
President/CEO	George Mikitarian: President/ CEO [PP]	12/2022
Executive Management Committee	Executive Management Committee [PP]	12/2022
Policy Management	Policy Management [PP]	12/2022
	Natalie Sellers: Sr Vice President, Communications, Community & Cor	12/2022

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