

SUBJECT: PATIENT VISITATION POLICY	REFERENCE 2005
DEPARTMENT: Hospital Wide / Administration	PAGE: 1 OF: 4
APPROVED BY: JPH Governing Board	EFFECTIVE: 03/28/2018 REVISED: February 2024

PURPOSE:

To ensure that all patients of Jackson Parish Hospital enjoy equal visitation privileges consistent with patient preferences, but subject to any justified clinical restrictions that the hospital may impose. Jackson Parish Hospital recognizes the important role that social interaction, camaraderie, and emotional support serve in the overall health and well-being of patients. To this end, JPH will strive to provide visitation rights to all patients to the extent that this visitation does not interfere with the provision of appropriate medical care and treatment.

Definitions:

1. **Clinical Justification** – clinically necessary or reasonable justifications for the restriction or limitation of a patient's visitation rights in order to provide safe and effective medical care to all patients. A clinical justification for restriction or limitation of visitation may include, but not strictly be limited to, one or more of the following:
 - Valid court order limiting or restraining contact
 - Visitor behavior that presents a direct risk or threat to the patient, hospital staff, or other persons in the immediate environment.
 - Visitor behavior that disrupts the functioning of the patient care unit
 - Visitor condition that poses risk of infection for patient
 - Patient condition that poses risk of infection for visitor
 - Extraordinary protection due to a pandemic, infectious disease outbreak, or other **declared** emergency situation.
 - The patient's need for privacy or rest.
 - The need for privacy or rest by another individual in the patient's shared room
 - A situation in which the patient is undergoing a clinical intervention or procedure whereby the treating healthcare professional believes it is in the patient's best interest to limit visitation for the duration of the clinical intervention or procedure (ex: surgery, extensive dressing changes, etc.).

2. **Patient** – a person registered at the facility for the purpose of having medical treatment provided to them.

3. **Support Person:** a family member, friend or other individual designated by the patient or identified by the hospital who has presented to the facility for the purpose of providing support to the patient during the course of the patient's hospital stay. This person may exercise the patient's visitation rights on the patient's behalf if the patient is unable to do so. This person may, but need not be, an individual legally responsible for making medical decisions on the patient's behalf.

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Policy:

1. **Statement of Patient Visitation Rights:** The hospital shall inform each patient and their designated representative, if appropriate, of the patient’s right to visitation. This notification will be provided prior to the initiation of care (when feasible), and in a method comprehensible by the patient and their representative. This notification will inform the patient and their representative of:

- The patient right to visitation
- The patient right to identify a support person
- That visitation may be restricted or limited only as clinically necessary and reasonable.

All visitors designated by the patient (or by the patient’s identified support person where appropriate) shall enjoy visitation privileges that are no more restrictive than those which immediate family members would enjoy.

Jackson Parish Hospital will allow members of the clergy to visit patients including during a public health emergency whenever a patient or the legal or designated representative of the patient requests the visit. Special consideration shall be given to patients receiving end-of-life care.

2. **Selection of Visitors:** The hospital shall accept verbal confirmation from a patient of individual(s) who should be admitted as visitors of the patient including but not limited to, a spouse, a domestic partner (including a same-sex domestic partner), another family member or a friend and individual(s) who should be denied visitation rights. This right also includes but is not limited to the right to consensual non-sexual physical contact such as handholding or hugging. The hospital may record such information in the patient's records for future reference. In the event the patient is a minor, the legal parent of the minor shall be given the opportunity to verbally designate the individuals permitted to visit the minor patient.
3. **Selection of Support Person:** A patient may verbally designate a support person to exercise the patient's visitation rights on his or her behalf should the patient be unable to do so. Upon such designation by a patient, the legal status of the relationship between the patient and the designated support person shall be irrelevant. This designation of an individual as the patient’s support person does **not** extend to medical decision making. In the event the patient is unable to exercise his or her patient visitation rights, the hospital shall recognize the support person’s verbal directive as to who should be admitted as visitors of the patient and which individuals who should be denied visitation rights with respect to such patient.

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- 4. Incapacitated patients:** In the event a patient is unable to select visitors due to incapacitation, and patient has not designated a support person to exercise the patient's visitation rights, the hospital may consider the following no-exhaustive forms of proof to establish the appropriateness of a visitor, or to designate a support person for the incapacitated patient when two or more individuals claim to be the incapacitated patient's support person capable of exercising the patient's visitation rights:
- an advance directive naming the individual as a support person, approved visitor, or designated decision maker (regardless of the State in which the directive is established)
 - Shared residence.
 - Shared ownership of a property or business.
 - Financial interdependence.
 - Marital/relationship status.
 - Existence of a legal relationship (including a legal relationship recognized in another jurisdiction, even if not recognized in the hospital's jurisdiction, including parent-child, civil union, marriage, or domestic partnership).
 - Acknowledgement of a committed relationship (e.g., an affidavit); or
 - Written documentation of the patient's chosen individual(s) even if it is not legally recognized advance directive.
- 5. Health and Safety:** Provisions to protect the health, safety and welfare of the patients and the staff will be instituted according to CDC guidelines. However, the rules may not require visitors to submit proof of any vaccination or immunization.
- 6. Visitation Guidelines**
- Lobby Hours 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM Monday-Friday. Closed Saturday and Sunday.
 - After lobby hours doors automatically lock and visitors must enter through the Emergency Room Entrance and sign in with the Security Guard.
 - Exterior doors are alarmed for patient safety and may be exited at any time but will alert and audibly alarm if propped open. Visitors exiting through a side door must re-enter through the Emergency Room Entrance. Visitors propping doors open may be asked to leave the facility.
 - For the safety, security, and privacy of other patients, visitors should remain in their patient's room or visitor-designated areas such as lobbies and waiting areas until they decide to leave the facility. Visitors should not enter areas marked Secure, Employee-Only, or Restricted. Visitors found in non-public areas or attempting to access non-public areas may be asked to leave the facility.
 - Only licensed and trained service dogs are allowed in the hospital.
 - All children 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult.

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- Jackson Parish Hospital, its associated facilities and all facility property is a smoke-free campus per the Louisiana Smoke-Free Air Act of 2006 (RS 40:1300.251). Smoking in hospital facilities or property carries the potential for financial penalties.
7. **Clinical Restrictions on Patient’s Visitation Rights:** The hospital may impose justified clinical restrictions on a patient’s visitation rights. When restricting visitation rights, a representative of the hospital shall explain to the patient (or support person as applicable) the reasons for the restrictions or limitations on the patient’s visitation rights, as well as how the focus of any restriction of a patient’s visitation rights is to protect the health and safety of patients admitted to our facility.
 8. **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.