

SUBJECT: Patient Visitations Rights	REFERENCE #: HOS-145-1-1 REG #: C-1000 – C-1002
DEPARTMENT: Patient Care Areas 	PAGE: 1 OF: 4
	EFFECTIVE: 10/8/2025
APPROVED BY: Scott Langford, CEO Amy Contreras, Chief Nursing Officer Guy Dansie, COO	REVISED: 7/7/2025

PURPOSE:

- Ensures patient visitors at Milford Memorial Hospital experience fair, consistent, and safe visitation privileges aligned with patient preferences and needs.
- Provides guidance for “Justified Clinical Restrictions”.
- Provides clarity for expectations and requirements for visitors, patients, and hospital staff.

POLICY:

- Statement of Patient Visitation Rights:
Attending hospital staff shall inform each patient, or their designated support person of their visitation rights in writing upon admission. Statement of rights will include:
Patient’s visitation rights
Patient’s right to receive visitors including a primary visitor and other visitors as designated including, but not limited to a spouse, domestic partner, family member(s), or friend(s).
A patient has the right to withdraw or deny visitation consent at any time.
Justified Clinical Restrictions may be imposed on a patient’s visitation rights.
- All patient designated visitors shall enjoy equal visitation privileges.
- Selection of Visitors:
The hospital shall accept verbal confirmation from a patient of individuals who may be admitted as a patient visitor. A patient may deny visitation rights for individuals. The hospital may record approvals or denials in the patient’s records for future reference. A minor patient shall have a legal parent or guardian the opportunity to verbally designate the individuals permitted to visit.
- Selection of a Support Person or Primary Visitor:
A patient may verbally designate a support person or primary visitor to exercise visitation rights if the patient is not able to do so. Designation of a Support Person or Primary Visitor is not based on a legal status or relationship to the patient. The designation does not extend to medical decision making. If a patient is unable to exercise their patient visitation rights, the hospital shall recognize the support person’s verbal directive regarding who is admitted as visitors.

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- Incapacitated Patients:
 In the event a patient is unable to select visitors due to incapacitation and the patient has not designated a support person for visitation rights, the hospital may consider the following non-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 (may be 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 a legally recognized advance directive.
- Justified Clinical Restrictions on Patient's Visitation Rights:
 The hospital may impose Justified Clinical Restrictions on a patient's visitation rights. When restricting visitation rights 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 and how the Hospital's visitation policies are aimed at protecting the health and safety of all patients.
- 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.
- The hospital shall not restrict, limit or otherwise deny visitation privileges on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation or disability.

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- Visitors who are not the support person or primary visitor shall have visitation limited in duration and frequency determined by an acceptable level to the patient and attending hospital clinical staff.
- The maximum number of visitors per day shall be determined by what is acceptable to the patient and attending hospital clinical staff.
- All visitors will be educated on the importance of infection control. Education may include but is not limited to handwashing, use of masks or other personal protective equipment, cough and sneeze etiquette, and the importance of not visiting when experiencing any symptoms of contagious illnesses. Education materials may include signs, verbal communications, and website information.
- All visitors shall adhere to the same requirements established for the hospital clinical care staff for the patient.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS:

- Justified Clinical Restrictions:
 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 a patient or other patients. A Justified Clinical Restriction may include, but need not be limited to one or more of the following:
 - A court order limiting or restraining contact
 - Behavior presenting a direct risk or threat to the patient, hospital staff, or other in the immediate environment
 - Behavior disruptive of the functioning of the patient care unit
 - Reasonable limitations of the number of visitors at any one time
 - Patient's risk of infection by the visitor
 - Visitors risk of infection by the patient
 - Extraordinary protections because of a pandemic or infectious disease outbreak
 - Substance abuse treatment protocols requiring restricted visitation
 - Patient's need for privacy or rest
 - Need for privacy or rest by another individual in the patient's shared room

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When a 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:
Anyone seeking care in any department of the hospital.
- Support Person or Primary Visitor:
A family member, friend or other individual who is at the hospital to support the patient during the course of the patient's stay and may exercise visitation rights when the patient is unable to do so. This individual does not need to be the same individual legally responsible for making medical decisions on the patient's behalf.
- Visitor:
A person other than a Support Person or Primary Visitor who may visit a patient during the course of the patient's stay in the hospital.



