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Area Administration

Patient Visitation Rights

Purpose:

To ensure that all patients enjoy equal visitation privileges consistent with patient preferences and subject to the hospital's clinical restrictions and to comply with CFR 5482.13(h) - Patient Visitation Rights

Definitions:

Level 1: The Community Transmission Level for infectious diseases (e.g., COVID) in Gonzales County is not considered High.

Level 2: The Community Transmission Level for infectious diseases (e.g., COVID) in Gonzales County is considered High.

Attending Physician - An attending physician is a physician on record for the patient.

QPD - Qualified Period of Disaster

Policy

The visitation policy applies to all hospital inpatients, regardless of their payment source, race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation or disability.

Upon admission each patient will be given information regarding the hospital visitation policy. This information will include any clinical restriction or hospital limitation on such rights.

Each patient (or support person where appropriate), has the right to consent to receive visitor(s) whom he/she designates, including, but not limited to, a spouse, a domestic partner (including a same sex domestic partner), another family member, or a friend, and has the right to withdraw or deny such

consent at any time.

Gonzales Healthcare Systems ensures that all visitors will enjoy full and equal visitation privileges consistent with patient preferences.

Potential Clinical Restrictions

Flexibility is allowed to balance all patient needs. With respect to restrictions on visitation, when visitation would interfere with the care of the patient and/or the care of other patients, it would be considered clinically appropriate to place a restriction.

As of September 1, 2021 in consideration of HB-221, a hospital **may not, during a qualified period of disaster, prohibit in-person visitation with a patient receiving care or treatment at the hospital unless federal law or a federal agency requires the hospital to prohibit in-person visitation during that period.**

During a QPD, a hospital may restrict the number of visitors for a patient to one visitor (at least one visitor must be allowed per patient during the QPD). The visitor might be required or requested to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at the time while visiting the hospital.

Patient visitors and guests can be limited except for the following:

- Governmental personnel performing their official duties
- An attorney, a legally authorized representative, or a person acting under an advance directive of a patient when performing their official duties.
- Provider of essential services (contract doctors, contract nurse, hospital workers, other contract health care providers, SANE nurses, a single designed caregiver acting on the patient's behalf).
- A religious or spiritual counselor

In Consideration of HB-2211. guidelines for denial of in-person visitation:

- If an attending physician determines that in-person visitation with a patient may lead to the transmission of an infectious agent that poses a serious community health risk, the attending physician can order that patient not be allowed in-person visitors.
- This order will only be valid for 5 days after the date the determination is made unless a renewal order is written by the attending physician.
- If an in-person visitor is denied for a patient receiving care or treatment at the hospital by order of the attending physician, the patient may authorize a person verbally or by advance directive or medical power of attorney to receive a daily oral or written update of the patient's condition. This person can be authorized verbally upon admission and documented in the Release of Directory and other Healthcare Information form. If the person is named in the patient's advance directive or the patient's medical power of attorney, that person will be the person who is otherwise the patient's surrogate decision-maker regarding the patient's health care needs and other applicable law; this person will be given an estimated date and time at which the patient will be discharged from the hospital.

Examples include, but are not limited to, patients undergoing care interventions or when there may be infection control issues. Other situations where restrictions are appropriate include disruptive,

threatening or violent behavior, a patient's need for rest or privacy, existing court order restricting contact of which the hospital is aware. Limitations may be placed on the number of visitors during a specific period of time. Based on the patient's condition, a minimum age requirement for child visitors or a physician order limiting visitation may be necessary.

Level I includes the following visitation rules:

- Inpatient - Unless ordered by the physician or requested by the patient, Gonzales Healthcare Systems does not limit visitors.
- Inpatient - A patient with an illness that poses a health risk to the community will be allowed one visitor per day.
 - A patient at the end of life may be allowed additional family members. This will be at the discretion of the charge nurse.
- Emergency Room patients are allowed one visitor

Level II includes the following visitation rules:

- Inpatient - Unless ordered by the physician, patients are allowed one visitor at a time during stated visiting hours.
 - A patient at the end of life may be allowed additional family members. This will be at the discretion of the charge nurse.
- Inpatient - A patient with an illness that poses a health risk to the community will be allowed one visitor per day.
 - A patient at the end of life may be allowed additional family members. This will be at the discretion of the charge nurse.
- Outpatients are allowed one visitor/guest.
- Emergency Room patients are allowed one visitor.
- Ambulatory Surgery patients are allowed one visitor who will be allowed to wait in the surgical waiting area.

Gonzales Healthcare Systems does not allow underage overnight guests unless that guest is the parent of a hospitalized infant or child.

Regular visiting hours are 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Overnight guests are not permitted in semi-private rooms to ensure the safety and privacy of both patients.

Overnight guests are limited to one guest per person in private rooms.

If an executive order or other direction is issued by the Governor of Texas, the President of the United States, or another applicable authority that is more restrictive than the emergency rule or any minimum standard relating to GHS, GHS must comply with the executive order or other direction.

The Infection Preventionist or his/her designee will review the community transmission levels of infectious diseases posted by the CDC each week and will revise posting of visitor restrictions as

necessary.