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Visitor and Essential Care Partner		Last Review Date 2025-06-18

A printed copy of this document may not reflect the current electronic version on the LWDH Intranet.

APPENDICES Yes No

PREAMBLE/PURPOSE

Lake of the Woods District Hospital (LWDH) is committed to our mission of supporting patients and families along their health care journey. In keeping with our mission, this policy guides staff in how to work in partnership with the patient, the patient’s family or designated ‘care partner’ during an admission or visit to our facility.

LWDH is dedicated to creating an environment that is supportive of patients and their families. We strive to provide a safe, secure, and comfortable environment for our patients and staff. LWDH appreciates the invaluable role that visitors and essential care partners play in supporting family members and friends who are patients in hospitals


Staff must adhere to this policy and ensure compliance when they visit the hospital outside of their regular hours and/or duties.

DEFINITIONS

- a) A **visitor** is someone whose time with the patient is discretionary and short-term/temporary. This can include visits that are social in nature, where they are not involved in the direct care of the patient.
- b) An **Essential Care Partner (ECP) is identified by the patient, and/or Substitute Decision Maker, and/or the care team** who is a family member or significant other **who is deemed important to the patient’s care** and who provides physical, psychological and/or emotional support that is important in helping improve health outcomes of the patient. ECP presence improves patient safety, reduces harm, improves the quality of care, improves patient outcomes, patient care experiences as well as contributes to better communication between health care teams and patients.

Some of the ways ECPs are welcome to participate in patient care include:

- Supporting patient decision-making.
- Assisting patients in eating, moving around, toileting, and communicating as needed.

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- Participating in patient and family education.
- Informing the care team when they see a change in the patient.
- Providing emotional and cognitive support.
- Helping patients use technology to connect with loved ones.
- Helping vulnerable patients who may be unable to communicate effectively or who are suffering from cognitive impairment.
- Patients who require a caregiver to prevent physical hardship or support for transitions in care.

POLICY

1. LWDH recognized the benefits and importance that visitors play in the wellbeing of our patients. We welcome visitors between the hours of 11 am to 9 pm, 7 days a week.
2. All Visitors and Essential Care Partners (ECPs):
 - Will perform hand hygiene upon entering and exiting a patient's room.
 - Will not visit if they are feeling unwell, have symptoms of a respiratory or flu-like illness, or a known communicable disease.
 - Will follow instructions from staff on the unit.
 - Will remain in the area/department they are visiting.
 - Will comply with the established visiting hours.
 - If the hospital is in outbreak, will follow instructions from hospital staff.
 - During an outbreak, Visitors will report to Patient Registration prior to proceeding to the patient's room.


Children (i.e. <14 years) who are supervised by an adult, other than the patient, are welcomed. The supervising adult will be responsible for monitoring the children's activities.

3. Visitors and Essential Care Partners (ECPs) will **not be permitted** to enter or remain within the facilities if they:
 - **Express any violent and aggressive behaviours, verbal abuse, harassment, racism and/or discrimination towards our staff or others.**
 - Exhibit behaviour that is disruptive in maintaining a therapeutic environment on the patient care unit, whose behaviour is disruptive or infringes upon the rights or safety of

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others may be asked to leave. Please refer to LWDH's policy on [Respectful Workplace Harassment Policy and Procedure](#) and [Respectful Workplace Violence Policy and Procedure](#).

- Are non-compliant with LWDH's policies.
4. There may be interruptions to visiting to protect the privacy rights of other patients or to maintain safety and security. In the unique event that visiting would need to be limited to ensure safety, confidentiality, and/or effective delivery of care; LWDH employees will work with families, visitors, and/or ECPs to continue their presence as soon as possible. Examples where visiting may need to be restricted include:
- A legal reason (i.e., a restraining order, the patient is in legal custody or a court order prohibiting visitors).
 - A family member or friend who has a contagious illness or has had a known exposure to a communicable disease that may jeopardize the patient's health.
 - A unit in outbreak status.
 - Pandemic.
 - An emergency situation.
 - A patient residing in semi-private space that requires immediate lifesaving measure (e.g. resuscitation) or when a sensitive/private discussion needs to occur. In these instances, those present with other patients may be asked to temporarily step out of the room or area.
 - Delivery of treatment or medical procedures where patient has not provided consent for visitors or at the discretion of the clinical staff based on the principles of safety, confidentiality, and/or effective delivery of the items above.
5. Visiting will be balanced with patient and staff safety while protecting the confidentiality and privacy of all patients. This policy is intended to be flexible in order to respond to the diverse and individual needs and preferences of each patient as well as to foster the safety of patients, families, and staff.


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6. **Outbreaks:** In the event of a respiratory, gastrointestinal, or COVID outbreak, Infection Control and Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S), will provide clear direction on visitor restrictions. **This will be communicated broadly to all staff and the public.**

Emergency Department	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> One (1) visitor for each ED patient per ED visit. The total number of ECP/visitors at one time will not exceed one (1) person unless there is an extenuating circumstance (see #5 below). Both parents/guardians of a minor child will <u>always be allowed</u>. A capable patient must consent to an ECP/visitor being present before letting them into the department. For extenuating circumstances, please see the applicable section below. Decisions regarding extenuating circumstances/exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis in collaboration with the Unit Manager, Hospital Supervisor, and Team Lead (if on-site). Will also include Infection Control and OH&S when applicable (i.e. outbreak status).
Outpatient visits, day surgery and procedures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> All Outpatient Departments will be allowed one (1) visitor per visit. Diagnostic Imaging - one (1) visitor for <u>obstetrical appointments only</u>. Both parents/guardians of a minor child will <u>always be allowed</u> in any outpatient department. For extenuating circumstances, please see the applicable section below. Decisions regarding extenuating circumstances/exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis in collaboration with the Unit Manager, Hospital Supervisor, and Team Lead (if on-site). Will also include Infection Control and OH&S when applicable (i.e. outbreak status).
Inpatients	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The number of visitors at one time will be determined in collaboration with the patient and family and take into consideration whether the room is being shared by another patient(s) and will be thoroughly communicated at shift report to ensure consistency for the patient and family. <u>Visitors are permitted between the hours of 11:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.</u> Both parents/guardians of a minor child will <u>always be allowed</u>. Staff will facilitate the use of technology (iPad) for patients to communicate/visit with family as able. For extenuating circumstances, please see the applicable section below. Decisions regarding extenuating circumstances/exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis in collaboration with the Unit

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	<p>Manager, Hospital Supervisor, and Team Lead (if on-site). Will also include Infection Control and OH&S when applicable (i.e. outbreak status).</p>
Intensive Care Unit (ICU)	<p>1. Visitors to Adult Intensive Care (ICU) are limited to Immediate family only, 2 (two) people at one time, are limited to 20 (twenty) minutes at time and are at the discretion of ICU or Hospital Supervisor dependent on the stability of patient.</p>
Maternity Inpatients	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Any two (2) visitors</u> allowed in the Maternity Unit between the hours of 11:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. 2. Maternity inpatients are also permitted two (2) <u>ECP/labour partners.</u> 3. The total number of ECP/labour partners/visitors at one time will not exceed two (2) people. (including children of labouring patient) 4. The labouring patient will choose their ECP/labour partners <u>in advance</u> of the delivery if in an outbreak. 5. For extenuating circumstances, please see the applicable section below. Decisions regarding extenuating circumstances/exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis in collaboration with the Unit Manager, Hospital Supervisor, and Team Lead (if on-site). Will also include Infection Control and OH&S when applicable (i.e. outbreak status).
4N- Psychiatry Inpatients	<p>1. Visitors on Adult Mental Health (4 North) are over the age of 16. Visitors under 16 years of age can visit off the unit if prearranged and the patient is stable enough to visit off the unit.</p>
Extenuating Circumstances/ Exceptions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decisions regarding extenuating circumstances/exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis in collaboration with the Unit Manager, Hospital Supervisor, and Team Lead (if on-site). Will also include Infection Control and OH&S when applicable (i.e. outbreak status). 2. Visitors/ECPs may be re-evaluated for extenuating circumstances/exceptions, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>elderly</i> • <i>critical illness</i> • <i>pediatrics</i> • <i>palliative care</i> • <i>hospice care</i>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>end-of-life</i> (for whom imminent death is anticipated or possible in the next 7 days) • <i>Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD)</i> <p>3. The number of visitors at one time will be determined in collaboration with the patient and family and take into consideration whether the room is being shared by another patient(s) and will be thoroughly communicated at shift report to ensure consistency for the patient and family.</p> <p>4. If requested by the patient, a religious leader or traditional healer will be permitted.</p>
Incarcerated Patients from the Jail	<p>1. Occasionally, incarcerated patients from the jail are admitted to our institution and it is our duty to ensure the safety of the Ministry of the Solicitor General (MSG) staff, our staff, our patients, and the public. It is imperative that the incarcerated patient's location not be given to any member of the public in order to prevent unauthorized visits to their room. No visitors are allowed unless prior approval is received from the MSG Staff. Staff should not disclose date and time of appointments.</p>

Related Documents:

[LWDH Declaration of Patient Values, Rights, and Responsibilities Policy](#)

[LWDH Declaration of Patient Values, Rights, and Responsibilities Pamphlet](#)

Resources:

Trillium Health Partners. 2022. Visiting Policy.

Red Lake Margaret Cochenour Memorial Hospital. Family Presence Guidelines.