



## Patient Visitation Rights Policy

### Purpose

Astria Sunnyside Hospital and Astria Health Centers will protect and promote patient visitation rights. We believe visits from family and friends are important to a patient's recovery. This policy is established to provide protection and promotion of our patient visitation rights.

### Audience- All Astria Staff

### Key Concepts and Terms

Justified Clinical Restrictions - means 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 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 others in the immediate environment
- behavior disruptive of the functioning of the patient care unit
- reasonable limitations on the number of visitors at any one time
- patient's risk of infection by the visitor
- visitor's 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
- when 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.

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Patient - means anyone admitted to the Hospital.

Support Person - an adult (18 years or older, unless authorized by nursing administration) family member, friend or other individual who is at the Hospital to support the patient during the course of the patient's stay at the Hospital and may exercise the patient's visitation rights on patient's behalf if patient is unable to do so. Such individual may, but need not be an individual legally responsible for making medical decisions on the patient's behalf.

## **Policy**

- On admission or as soon as possible thereafter Astria Sunnyside Hospital and Astria Health Centers shall inform each patient (or support person, where appropriate) of his/her visitation rights, including any clinical restriction or limitation on his/her/their rights.
- Astria Sunnyside Hospital retains its right to restrict patient visitation when necessary for clinical or patient treatment reasons and will impose restrictions or limitations on visitors on a clinically reasonable bases including but not limited to:
  - Infection control issues
  - Visitation may interfere with the care of other patients
  - Astria Sunnyside Hospital and Astria Health Centers are aware that there is an existing court order restricting contact
  - Visitors engaging in ***disruptive, threatening, or violent behavior of any kind***
- Each patient (or support person, where appropriate) shall be informed of the right, subject to his/her consent, to receive the visitors whom he/she designates. These visitors may include, but are not limited to, a spouse; a state recognized domestic partner (including same-sex partners), a non-registered domestic partner (including same-sex partners), other family members, or a friend. The patient shall also be informed of his/her right to withdraw or deny consent at any time.
- Astria Sunnyside Hospital and Astria Health Centers shall not limit, restrict, or deny visitation privileges on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.
- Astria Sunnyside Hospital and Astria Health Centers shall ensure that all visitors designated by the patient (or support person, where appropriate) enjoy full and equal visitation privileges consistent with patient preferences.

- When a patient is incapacitated or otherwise unable to communicate his or her wishes and an individual provides an advance directive designating an individual as the patient's support person (it is not necessary for the document to use this exact term), the hospital must accept this designation, provide the required notice of the patient's visitation rights, and allow the individual to exercise the patient's visitation rights on the patient's behalf.
- Astria Sunnyside Hospital and Astria Health Centers may, when circumstances require, request written documentation of patient representation by a legal document. Examples of when documentation might be required are if there is a conflict between two visitors or if there is a dispute as to who the patient support person is. Astria Sunnyside Hospital and Astria Health Centers shall follow RCW 7.70.065 in resolving conflicts among those claiming to be support persons.
- In no case may Astria Sunnyside Hospital and Astria Health Centers request documentation of status as a patient support person in a way that discriminates on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.
- Alcoholic beverages and other unauthorized drugs and drug paraphernalia, (including the visitor's prescription and non-prescription medications) may not be brought into the facility for personal use. Patient's own medications will be secured.
- Astria Sunnyside Hospital is a smoke free/vape free environment and complies with Washington State law RCW 70.160. Smoking within 25 feet of the hospital building is prohibited or on hospital property unless inside one's own private vehicle.
- Visiting hours are encouraged between 08:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- Visitation may be limited when the patient is in critical condition.
- Visitation in the Emergency Room may be limited to two per patient. Visitors will be requested to stay in the appropriate patient room to maintain confidentiality of all patients. Visitors may rotate in to see a particular patient. More than two visitors may be allowed if approved.
  - In the event that the patient is critical, or whose illness or condition warrants more family, the quiet room can be utilized to keep family together and enhance contact by the physician with the patient's family.

- Patients who have a specific active or undiagnosed communicable disease that require extended isolation precautions may require visitor limitations or compliance with isolation precautions. If visitors are allowed in Isolation rooms, nursing staff will educate visitors to the appropriate isolation precautions.
- All visitors are asked to sanitize their hands upon entry to the hospital, and entry and exit of patient rooms. Hand sanitizer is conveniently located throughout the facility to accommodate this request.
- A family member is encouraged to stay with pediatric patients at all times to assist in providing a sense of comfort and security in unfamiliar surroundings.
- Children (<14yo) are not allowed to be left unattended in waiting rooms, the lobby, patient rooms, the cafeteria, or hallways.
- With permission from the nursing staff, children may be allowed to make brief visits, as long as they are not ill, are supervised at all time, and the condition of the patient does not otherwise contradict their visitation.
- Visitors are responsible for orderly and appropriate conduct during visitation and may be asked to leave the patient's room, the department, or the facility for disorderly or inappropriate conduct. Any disorderly or inappropriate conduct which place hospital personnel at physical risk allow for immediate dismissal of the visitor(s). Security is to be notified immediately.
- For health and safety requirements, visitors are expected to wear appropriate clothing, including shoes and shirts, and well-fitting source control facemask.
- Visitation requested after 8:00 p.m. will occur with an escort by Astria Health staff or a security personnel from the lobby to the patient room. When the visitor leaves, they will be escorted by Astria staff or a security personnel through the hospital to the exit.
  - Building access for visitors after hours will be limited to the emergency department entrance. All other external doors are secured. Visitors are expected to remain in the patient room/unit unless exiting the building, access to other areas of the facility are for authorized staff only.
- In situations where the patient has a roommate, there are additional instructions to visitors:

- Be sensitive to the condition and need for privacy of the patient and the patient's roommate.
- Please limit the number of visitors
- Please maintain a calm and quiet environment.
- Overnight stays by an adult family member or adult support person can sometimes be arranged based on patient condition. The family must discuss with and receive permission from the nursing staff to stay overnight and it must not impinge on the privacy or rest/sleep of the other patient in a double room.
  - The Family Birth Center may allow families to remain with the patient any hour of the day as approved by nursing staff. The Father or designated support person may stay with the patient.
  - Pediatric Patients in Med/Surg or ICU encourage the parent or caregiver to stay with the patient overnight. The parent caring for the admitted child should not bring smaller siblings to the hospital while caring for the patient, unless another adult is caring for the siblings.

### **COVID-19 Response Procedure:**

Visitors are not required to wear a facemask or face covering in an Astria Health facility. While inside the facility they are encouraged to use hand sanitizer, and not visit if they have symptoms, a positive COVID test within 10 days, or a prolonged exposure to a COVID-19 positive person within 10 days.

### **At the direction of the local and/or state health department with increased concern for COVID-19 or other respiratory infections:**

Visitors will be asked to wear a mask/face covering while inside the facility and encouraged to use hand sanitizer. Visitors must comply with PPE when indicated and requested by healthcare personnel.

### **COVID-19 remains a public health concern. The following restrictions are in place:**

#### **For visitation of patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19:**

- Limit visitors to the facility to only those essential for the patient's physical or emotional well-being and care (e.g., care partner, parent).

- Encourage use of alternative mechanisms for patient and visitor interactions such as video-call applications on cell phones or tablets.
  - If visitation to patients with a COVID-19 infection occurs, visits should be scheduled and controlled to allow for the following:
    - Facilities evaluate risk to the health of the visitor (e.g., visitor might have underlying illness putting them at higher risk for COVID-19) and ability to comply with precautions.
    - Instruction is provided before visitors enter patients' rooms, on hand hygiene, and use of PPE according to current policy while in the patient's room.
    - Visitors are not present during aerosol generating procedures or other procedures, unless necessary as part of patient care.
    - Visitors are instructed to only visit the patient's room. They should not go to other locations in the facility.

Additional visitation strategies in collaboration with the patient's care team include for COVID-19 positive patients:

- Where accessible, family and friends may gather outside the closed patient room window.
- Utilize personal or room phones
- Coordinate with the care team for use of the department iPad to coordinate a virtual meeting using Amazon Chime
- English and Spanish Instructions are provide for the family.

### **Implementation/Education Plan**

This policy will be updated as indicated following state and federal regulatory guidance.

### **Related Documents**

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (2018). State Operations Manual Appendix A §482.13 (h) Standard: Patient visitation rights.

[Behavioral Agreement.pdf](#)

### **References**

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (2018). State Operations Manual Appendix A. Washington State Legislature. RCW 7.70.065. Retrieved from <https://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=7.70.065>

- Legal authority: 42 CER 482.13(h); 42 CFR 485.635(f); RCW7.70.056; RCW 26.60.70;
- The Joint Commission: RI.01.02.02(8)
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control->

[recommendations.html](#)

- <https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/Documents/1600/coronavirus//505-159-VisitorGuidance-InpatientHospitalOutpatientSettings.pdf>
- [https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view?list\\_select\\_state=Washington&data-type=CommunityLevels&null=CommunityLevels&list\\_select\\_county=53077](https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view?list_select_state=Washington&data-type=CommunityLevels&null=CommunityLevels&list_select_county=53077)
- Washington State Department of Health SARS-CoV-2 Infection Prevention and Control in Healthcare Settings Toolkit, April 2023.  
<https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2023-04/420474-COVID19PreventionHealthcareSettingsToolkit.pdf?uid=642b4c8c9dfd2>
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