

UVMHN Elizabethtown Community Hospital Visitor/Welcoming Policy Directive

Updated: 3/30/21 – Supersedes 3/24/21

Effective 4/1/21

Compliance with New York State Department of Health and The University of Vermont Health Network

Purpose: to define guidelines and policy of authority agencies, limiting visitation into the hospital at both campus and health centers.

General Visitation Guidelines:

In alignment with the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), UVHN Elizabethtown Community Hospital has taken precautions to protect and maintain the health and safety of patients and staff during the COVID-19 outbreak and to prevent the introduction of this infection into our hospitals.

UVHN; Elizabethtown Community Hospital welcomes visitors to the hospitals, including Emergency Rooms, as long as visitors adhere to the guidelines below:

- Visitors must be 18 years of age or older. Exceptions may apply based on the clinical care team's judgement.
- Visitors shall enter the facility through each Hospital & Health Center main entrance to enable screening of all individuals entering. This includes: having their temperature taken; and being screened for symptoms of COVID-19. If the visitor is positive for any of these, they won't be permitted to enter.
- Visitors who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the previous 10 days will not be allowed into the hospital.
- Anyone who has been a household contact or in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 over the past 14 days will not be allowed into the hospital
- Visitors who have traveled internationally **OR** are NOT fully vaccinated who have traveled to/from a location outside of NY, CT, PA, NJ, MA, or VT within the past 14 days must do one of the following in order to be allowed entry:
 - Have a negative COVID diagnostic test that was taken after Day 4 of arrival in New York **OR** have self-quarantined for 10 days upon arrival to New York

**In compliance with NYS travel advisory, domestic travelers and individuals who have previously been diagnosed with lab confirmed COVID-19 and since recovered, are not required to quarantine and will be permitted entry.*

- All visitors will be asked to perform meticulous hand hygiene and wear a snug-fitting cloth or procedural mask covering their mouth and nose throughout the visit (note, masks with

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- exhalation valves and gaitors are not permitted) and must follow social distancing principles. Appropriate masks will be provided on request.
- Visitors will be asked to stay in the patient room / at the patient bedside throughout the visit, unless asked to step out by the patient care team. Note: visitors are not permitted to stay in room during aerosol generating procedures.
- All visitors are asked to limit traffic in hallways and should not congregate in public spaces (i.e. waiting rooms, hallways, lobby).
- Visitors are requested to wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). If a patient is under special precautions, the visitor will be asked to wear additional PPE, (i.e., mask, gown, gloves and eye protection, if available). When leaving the area/room, visitors will remove PPE (except mask), perform hand hygiene and exit the hospital through the main access point.
- Visitors who fail to agree to follow our masking and visitation guidelines shall be asked to leave the facility.
- The hospital must maintain a visitor log which contains the visitor's name, contact information, date of the visit, and patient/department of the patient.
 - The in-patient unit and departments who screen their own patients/visitors upon arrival shall be responsible to maintain their own visitor log within the department and save in an electronic format.
- Visitor Education:
 - Visitors should be advised of potential risks and benefits of the visitor's presence with the visitor and or depending on the patient's condition, the patient.
 - Verbal and written material shall be reviewed with the visitor on wearing the procedure mask, hand hygiene, gloves, and a gown.

In Patient Location:

- Patients may have up to TWO visitors at a time, for a maximum of four hours of visitation per day. Visiting hours are between 1:30pm and 5:30pm.
- Patients with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities and patients with cognitive impairments including dementia may designate one support person to remain with them through their hospitalization. An additional visitor may also be with the patient during hospital designated visiting hours.
- Two Support persons may be designated to remain with patients in imminent end of life situations.
- In-room visits with patients suspected of having COVID-19 or test positive for COVID-19 will not be permitted. We will make every effort to support patient and family interaction by deploying the use of technology. * *Limited exceptions may be made for fully vaccinated individuals for those in imminent end of life situations.*
- For occupied semi private rooms, family / support person in room visitation may need to be limited or scheduled with the patient care team to ensure social distancing principles within the room occupancy.

- For PT/OT patients who need a family member/support person to be present for patient education/teaching, the therapy team shall determine if more than one visitor may attend the therapy session to ensure social distancing principles during the therapy encounter.

Emergency Departments / Outpatient Clinics (including Primary Care Practices):

- Patients may have up to two designated companions at the bedside.
- In-room visits with patients suspected of having COVID-19 or test positive for COVID-19 will not be permitted. We will make every effort to support patient and family interaction by deploying the use of technology. * *Limited exceptions may be made for fully vaccinated individuals for those in imminent end of life situations.*
- Visitation may be limited if the census is high and physical distancing is not is not feasible.
- Specialty Clinic Patients, may be accompanied to the facility by a companion. The nurse will determine allowing a companion based on the number of patients in the procedure/clinic area to maintain safe distancing practices.

* Note, in our Radiology, Physical Therapy (including Cardiopulmonary Rehab) and Chemo/Infusion Departments, due to limitations of department space capacity, visitors are limited to when it is medically necessary to facilitate care based on the clinical care team judgement.

Only ADA service animals can accompany family members/support people. All other animals, including previously approved therapy dogs and support animals, are not allowed at this time.

Vendors and Professional Partners

Vendors and partners in financial and professional service firms shall be restricted while the situation unfolds. If access is deemed medically essential (i.e. service repair) access must be restricted to only those required to address an essential service repair. These parties must schedule and receive approval to be onsite through their ECH point of contact and must agree to follow the guidelines.

General Notes:

- Extenuating circumstances not identified above, shall be evaluated on a case by case basis by the care team in consultation with nursing and/or department leadership.

- Visitation rules apply equally to employees who wish to visit friends or family regardless of whether they are on or off duty.
- **Patients presenting to pay bills or retrieve medical records:** Will be screened, logged as a visitor and escorted to the department.

References:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Healthcare Facilities: Managing Operations during the Covid-19 Pandemic* – updated June 28, 2020

New York State Department of Health Covid-19 Travel Advisory
<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>

New York State Department of Health. *Interim Health Advisory: COVID-19 Updated Guidance for Hospital Visitation*. 3/25/21

New York State Department of Health. *Informational Message: COVID-19 Hospital Visitation Program*. 6/17/20.

New York State Department of Health. *Informational Message: Revised Visitation Guidance- 5/20/2020*.

New York State Department of Health. *Health Advisory: COVID-19 Updated Guidance for Hospital Operators Regarding Visitation- 4/10/20*.

The University of Vermont Health Network. *COVID-19 Interim Visitor/Welcoming Policy- 3/12/20*.

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