

Visitation Policy During COVID-19 Pandemic

Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare recognizes the importance of family support in the healing process and, **effective Thursday, September 17, 2020**, limited visitation will be implemented.

Policy: Patient visiting is being limited at all MLH facilities until the transmission of COVID-19 is no longer a threat to our patients, staff, and community.

Purpose: To protect our patients, staff, visitors, and community during the outbreak of COVID-19, all facilities at Methodist Le Bonheur are limiting visitation.

Definitions:

- MLH facilities include inpatient, outpatient, ambulatory, and emergency departments and patients having surgery or procedures
- PUI – person under investigation
- Visitor – family, friend, support person, partner-in-care, caregiver, legal guardian (must be ≥ 18 years old)
- Duration of visit: this is from the time the visitor is screened until he/she leaves the hospital. Once a visitor leaves the hospital, he or she may not return until the next day

I. General Information

- a. NO visitors will be allowed in rooms or areas of patients with pending or positive COVID-19 tests; this includes the emergency department. End of life guidance is in separate policy for this patient group.**
- b.** Anyone with a compromised immune system or pulmonary complications should not visit unless absolutely necessary.
- c. Emergency department patients – adult and pediatric**
 - One visitor may accompany the patient. The visitor must screen negative and wear a hospital grade mask while in the hospital
 - If patient is critically ill and not COVID positive or PUI, the health care team will use their clinical judgment related to number of family allowed
 - Visitors must follow all required precautions to prevent patients and staff from exposure. These include wearing a hospital grade mask when the care team enters the room, maintaining 6 feet distance from others, performing hand hygiene as ordered, and following directions of hospital staff
- d. Operative and procedural areas (adults),** one visitor may accompany the patient and stay in the waiting area until the patient is either discharged to home or admitted; the visitor may see the patient post-operatively. For **pediatric patients**, two visitors may accompany the patient and stay in the waiting area.
 - Visitors will be screened and only admitted if negative. The visitor must wear a hospital grade mask while in the facility

- Visitors must follow all required precautions to prevent patients and staff from exposure. These include wearing a hospital grade mask, maintaining 6 feet distance from others, performing hand hygiene as ordered, and following directions of hospital staff
- e. **For inpatients (adults)**, one visitor may be designated – for the duration of the hospitalization - by the patient; this includes obstetrical patients. For pediatrics, two visitors may be designated by the patient and/or parent.
 - Visitors will be screened and only admitted if negative. The visitor must wear a hospital grade mask while in the facility
 - Visitor must remain in the patient’s room for the duration of the visit. Once the visitor leaves the facility for the day, he or she will not be readmitted until the next day
 - Visitors will not be admitted after 8P
 - Visitors must follow all required precautions to prevent patients and staff from exposure. These include wearing a hospital grade mask when the care team enters the room, maintaining 6 feet distance from others, performing hand hygiene as ordered, and following directions of hospital staff
- f. Patients arriving in the **ambulatory setting, including clinics or other outpatient areas**, in adult facilities, should arrive by themselves if at all possible. Pediatric patients may be accompanied by one parent or legal guardian.
 - Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare recognizes there are times when having a visitor or family member present is crucial (see exceptions below). In these cases, visitors will be allowed based on the situations listed below. All visitors will be screened and these exceptions only apply if a visitor screens negative. Visitors must wear a mask for the duration of the visit
- g. Volunteer programs and other community support programs have been stopped. Many volunteers are over age 60 and are particularly vulnerable should they be infected with COVID-19.
- h. Use of remote interpreting services and language lines will be used when possible.
- i. Visitors in violation will be removed. For instances of non-compliance that cannot be readily resolved, call Security.

II. **Visitor Exceptions: Apply to non COVID suspected or positive patients**

- a. Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) patients may have the birth parent and one significant other who must remain in the room the duration of the visit.
- b. Patients at end-of-life may have a very limited number of visitors who must remain in the room for the duration of the visit. See COVID-19 end of life policy for suspected or confirmed COVID patients.
- c. For the ambulatory setting (adult), patients where the visitor provides safety (e.g., altered mental or physical status; or developmental delay) or is **key** to patient care (e.g., disruptive behavior) may have one visitor who

must stay in the room and wear a mask for the duration of the visit

- d. Vendors and sales reps can only come onsite for required business by appointment. Only essential business is allowed
 - e. Contract staff (contractors, technicians, service technicians) will follow same screening process as associates and are only allowed for essential business
 - f. For any other unusual situations, the house supervisor or clinical director/manager of the unit will determine if visitors are allowed
- III. Documentation
- a. Document in Cerner under visitation/education band in the visitation section the type of visitor present such as, mother, legal guardian, friend, etc.