

INPATIENT VISITATION GUIDELINES

PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to be followed by visitors of hospitalized patients.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

San Francis Memorial Hospital (SFMH) encourages patients to receive visitors and establishes guidelines to ensure that visits are conducive to the patient's well-being and consistent with the delivery of safe and effective patient care.

SFMH adopts the following definition of “**family**” for purposes of hospital-wide visitation policy: “**Family**” means any person(s) who plays a significant role in an individual’s life. This may include a person(s) not legally related to the individual. Members of “**family**” include spouses, domestic partners, and both different-sex and same-sex significant others. “**Family**” includes a minor patient’s parents, regardless of the gender of either parent. Solely for purposes of visitation policy, the concept of parenthood is to be liberally construed without limitation as encompassing legal parents, foster parents, same-sex parent, step-parents, those serving in loco parentis, and other persons operating in caretaker roles.

All hospitalized patients have the right to have visitors of their choice during their stay, unless visitation interferes with the well-being, rights or safety of others, or is not medically indicated in the patient’s care. SFMH will not deny or restrict visitation privileges based on race, religion, ethnicity, language, culture, size, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, physical or mental ability or disability. Patients will be informed of these rights upon admission to the hospital.

Patients may receive visitors of their choice. Patients also have the right to withdraw or deny consent to visitation at any time. Patients who lack capacity may receive visits from family, friends and other individuals, consistent with the non-discrimination provisions of the paragraph. Visiting hours and regulations shall be maintained to allow patients, families and significant friends, time together during the hospitalization, and at the same time provide the patient with rest time, so as not to jeopardize his/her medical and nursing care.

1. Upon admission, the admitting nurse shall inform each patient (or representative, where appropriate) of his or her visitation rights, including any clinical restriction or limitation on such rights, when he or she is informed of his or her other rights under this section.
2. Upon admission, the admitting nurse shall inform each patient (or representative, where appropriate) of the right, subject to his or her consent, to receive the visitors whom he or 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 his or her right to withdraw or deny such consent at any time.

3. SFMH staff shall not restrict, limit, or otherwise deny visitation privileges on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.
4. SFMH staff shall ensure that all visitors designated by the patient (or representative, where appropriate) enjoy visitation privileges that are no more restrictive than those that immediate family members would enjoy.
5. For the rest and comfort of our patients, quiet time will be maintained after 8:30 PM.
6. For confidentiality reasons visitors must wait in public areas when not in the patient's room, unless otherwise directed by the nursing staff.
7. Visitors with obvious signs of respiratory or skin infections should not visit in the units, or must wear a mask and/or gown, if visiting is considered essential to patient care.
8. Children are allowed to visit. The Charge Nurse, Nurse Director of Nursing Supervisor has the discretion to limit visits by children when medically recommended.

PROCEDURE

A. General Regulations applies to Nursing Units unless otherwise stated:

1. Families/Partners in care are welcome 24 hours a day according to patient preference. Routine visiting hours at SFMH are from 11:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., seven days a week. The Charge Nurse, Nurse Director, or Nursing Supervisor may, at their discretion, allow family members/significant others to visit outside of regular visiting hours
2. The patient with decision-making capacity may designate who may visit, in accordance with this policy.
3. Visits from members of the clergy are welcome at any time when requested by the patient or the patient's representative.
4. SFMH considers the patient's wishes in determining who may visit when the patient lacks decision-making capacity. At a minimum any member of the household shall be permitted to visit.
5. The number of visitors at any time is guided by available space and patient's desire.
6. Visitors may not smoke in patient rooms, use a patient's bathroom facilities, or sit on patient beds.
7. Visitors may be asked to leave if their behavior is disruptive to the patient, other patients, visitors, or the unit.
8. Should any visitor appear intoxicated, use illicit drugs at SFMH, or appear to pose a threat to the safety of patients or employees, staff should immediately call Public Safety for help in removing them from the premises.
9. With the approval of the Nurse Director or designee, one family member/significant other visiting a patient may stay overnight.
10. Patient care is a priority. If the presence of visitors interferes with patient care, the Nurse Director or designee will ask the visitors to interrupt or end their visit.
11. Individuals may be restricted from visiting a patient when the patient requests that certain person(s) not be allowed to visit or when the parent, legal guardian, surrogate decision -

maker, SFMH, law enforcement agency, or court determine that such a restriction is in the patient's best interest.

B. Critical Care Unit:

1. The frequency and length of visits will be individualized to each patient and in consideration of unit activities and privacy of other patients.

C. Bothin Burn Center

1. The frequency and length of visits will be individualized to each patient and in consideration of unit activities and privacy of other patients.
2. Children age 12 and older are allowed to visit at the bedside.

D. Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU)

1. Immediate family/significant others are allowed in PACU when the patient is awake and stable. Only 1 family member may visit at a time. If the family member wishes to stay in PACU they must remain next to the patient's bed, and respect the privacy of other patients. Any family member may be asked to leave at any time dependent on the judgement of the nursing staff and unit dynamics.

E. Operating Room:

1. Family members are not allowed in the Operating Room.

F. Emergency Department:

1. A maximum of two visitors per patient are allowed at the patient's bedside at any moment. Exceptions are made at the discretion of the charge nurse or primary RN.

G. Psychiatric units

1. Visiting hours are from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 1 pm. to 7 p.m. weekends and holidays. Arrangements may be made for visits outside of the regular hours.
2. Patients have the option to restrict visitors by notifying unit staff of their preference.
3. Restriction of visitors imposed by the Psychiatric staff requires the completion of a "Denial of Patient's Rights" form. (See Department of Psychiatry Policy and Procedure #1.8.)
4. Overnight visitors are prohibited on the Psychiatric units.
5. In order to maintain appropriate boundaries for patients who have been recently hospitalized, former patients are not allowed to visit within 30 days of their discharge.

6. Minors (those under the age of 16) may not visit unless there is a physician's order. Visits must take place in an area away from other patients and must be continually supervised by a staff member.

H. Pets (See Animals in the Hospital Policy)

REFERENCES

CMS, CoP §482.13 Patient rights

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/presidential-memorandum-hospital-visitation>

Federal Register Vol.75, No. 223, November 19, 2010/Rules and Regulations pp. 70831 – 70844.

Institute for Patient and Family Centered Care Changing Hospital Visiting Policies and Practices: Supporting Family Presence and Participation.

Approvals

Patient Care Leadership Group

Chief Nurse Executive

Medical Executive Committee

Board of Trustees