

Visitation

Updated: 8/29/23

Policy:

It is the policy of SAGE Hospitals to support and facilitate in-person visitations that promotes a safe, secure, and supportive healing environment for patients during their hospital stay and ensure all visitors enjoy full and equal visitation privileges consistent with patient preferences and subject to the hospital's reasonable clinical and safety restrictions.

In accordance with R.S. 40:2005 ("No Patient Left Alone Law"), any person eighteen years or older may designate those individuals who will not be denied access to visit in-person during any stay in any hospital, nursing home, or other healthcare facility within the state of Louisiana, including during a public health emergency. Patients will have the right to consensual nonsexual physical contact, such as hand holding or hugging, between a patient and his/her visitor.

Patient Visitation Rights:

- Each patient (or support person, where appropriate) will be informed 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 at the time of admission to the facility.

A patient's "**support person**" does not necessarily have to be the same person as the "**patient's representative**" who is legally responsible for making medical decisions on the patient's behalf.

- A **support person** could be a family member, friend, or other individual who supports the patient during the course of the hospital stay. The support person may also exercise a patient's visitation rights on behalf of the patient with respect to other visitors when the patient is unable to do so. Hospitals must accept a patient's designation, orally or in writing, of an individual as the patient's support person.
- A **patient's representative** who is legally responsible for making medical decisions on the patient's behalf.
- In the event that a patient has both a representative and a support person who are not the same individual, and they disagree on who should be allowed to visit the patient, the hospital must defer to the decisions of the patient's representative. As the individual responsible for making decisions on the patient's behalf, the patient's representative has the authority to exercise a patient's right to designate and deny visitors just as the patient would if he or she were capable of doing so.
- Patients may receive visitors of their choosing, including, but not limited to, spouses, domestic partners (including same-sex domestic partners), other family members, or friends subject to the patient's consent.
- Patients may refuse visitors or may withdraw consent for one or more visitors at any time. SAGE will take reasonable measures to help patients enforce or implement their visitation preferences.
- SAGE will ensure that all visitors enjoy full and equal visitation privileges consistent with patient preferences.
- SAGE Hospitals will not restrict, limit, or otherwise deny visitation privileges based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability.
- Patients may designate personal representatives to exercise their visitation rights on their behalf. Patients may designate personal representatives in any manner, including orally, in writing, or through non-verbal communications (such as pointing).
- In accordance with R.S. 40:2005.1, the hospital will allow members of the clergy to visit patients during a public health emergency whenever a patient or the legal or designated representative of the patient requests the visit. Special consideration shall be given to patients receiving end-of-life care.

SAGE may clinically and/or reasonably restrict patient visitation when necessary to promote patient health and safety or to maintain a healing environment. Such restrictions may be based upon, but are not limited solely to, any of the following:

- A court order limiting or restraining contact;
- A visitor's behavior presenting a direct risk or threat to the patient, hospital staff, or others in the immediate environment;
- Visitor behavior or a number of visitor that is disruptive to the functioning of the patient care unit involved;
- The patient's risk of infection by the visitor; Visitors with signs and symptoms of a transmissible infection (e.g., a visitor is febrile and exhibiting signs and symptoms of an influenza-like illness) will be asked to defer visitation until they are no longer potentially infectious (e.g., 24 hours after resolution outbreak of fever without antipyretic medication), or according to CMS or CDC guidelines, and/or local health department recommendations.
- The visitor's risk of infection by the patient;
- A patient's need for privacy or rest, as agreed upon by the patient and his/her physician or caregiver;
- The need for privacy or rest by another patient in the patient's shared room;
- Any special restriction rules that apply to special patient care units (mental health/behavioral health, drug and alcohol, etc.);
- When visitation would otherwise interfere with the care of the patient and/or the care of other patients; and
- Applicable laws and regulations.

During Any Declared State of Public Health Emergency

- 1) Length and location of visits may be defined.
- 2) Visitors are not required to submit proof of any vaccination or immunization.
- 3) Visitors may be required to submit to health screenings, testing, and use of PPE as necessary.

References:

- 42 CFR 482.13(h)
- R.S. 40:2005