



ADM1.1.81 - Family presence and visiting

NURSING ADMINISTRATION 018780, approved by CNO/SVP, Patient Care Services on 8/2011

HPRC on 8/2011, CPC on 7/2011

Scope

Anne Arundel Medical Center, Inc. ("AAMC")

Policy Statement

At AAMC we recognize that families play an important part in the healing process and are a vital member of the health care team. We welcome families 24 hours a day according to patient preference. Family members, as identified by the patient, provide support, comfort, and important information during their hospital stay regardless of time of day, day of week or department.

Family **presence** will be balanced with patient and staff safety while protecting the confidentiality and privacy of all patients. All members of the AAMC care team, physicians, nurses and staff will adhere to this policy in order to ensure the promotion and consistency of patient-and **family**-centered care. This policy is intended to be flexible in order to respond to the diverse and individual needs and preferences of each patient as well as to foster the safety of patients, families, and staff.

Definitions

"Family" – a group of individuals with a continued legal, genetic and/or emotional relationship as defined by the patient. When the patient lacks the capacity to make his/her own healthcare decisions, the patient's designated healthcare agent or, in the absence of a designated healthcare agent, the surrogate decision maker will provide guidance in defining **family** for purposes of this policy.

"Visitor" – guests of the patient or **family**, who may or may not be a "blood relation".

Procedures

I. Patients and their families are considered essential members of the health care team.

II. Children under the age of 12 years must be accompanied by an adult, other than the patient, at all times.

III. Family members will be informed that arrangements for staying overnight are to be coordinated with the front desk or unit charge nurse in advance.

IV. It is the expectation that **family** members/visitors are free from any contagious disease that could adversely affect the health of the patient. There may be circumstances by which a screening tool may be utilized by Infection Control (e.g., outbreak or cluster of disease).

V. Exceptions to Family Presence or Visitors

Family and/or visitor **presence** may be limited under certain circumstances to include, but are not limited to the following examples:

a) A legal reason (e.g., a restraining order, the patient is in legal custody or a court order prohibiting visitors).

b) Behavior is disruptive to maintaining a therapeutic environment on the patient care unit.

c) A **family** member or visitor who has a contagious illness or has had a known exposure to a communicable disease that may jeopardize the patient's health.

d) An infectious disease outbreak, such as a pandemic, which requires severe access restrictions throughout the community.

e) A patient residing in semi-private space that requires immediate lifesaving measures (e.g. resuscitation) or when a sensitive/private discussion needs to occur. In these instances, those present with the other patient may be asked to temporarily step out of the room or area.

f) In situations where the patient lacks the capacity to make his/her own healthcare decisions, the healthcare agent or, in the absence of a designated healthcare agent, the surrogate decision maker will provide guidance in identifying '**family**' with the patient's best interest in mind. When guidance by the healthcare agent/surrogate is unavailable, the hospital staff will coordinate, as reasonably possible under the circumstances, **family presence** and visitor visitation with the patient.

References

Ahmann, E., Abraham, M., Johnson, B. (2004). Changing the concept of Families as Visitors: Supporting **family** Presence and participation. Institute for Patient and Family Centered Care: Bethesda, MD.

Neal, Twibell, Osborne & Harris (2010). Providing family friendly care – even when stress is high and time is short. American Nurse Today.

Institute for Patient- and Family-Centered Care (2010) Changing Hospital “Visiting” Policies and Practices: Supporting Family Presence and Participation.

Cross References

[ERR3.1.03](#) - "[Patient rights and responsibilities](#)" – "Patient Rights and Responsibilities"

[ERR3.1.01](#) - "[Assessing services for patients with special communication needs including interpreters](#)" – "Assessing services for patient with special communication needs including interpreters"

[ERR3.1.02](#) - "[Advance directive](#)" – "Advance Directives"

[GNP14.6.145](#) - "[Condition help \(h\) response program](#)" – "Condition Help (H) Response Program"

[IC5.1.03](#) - "[Isolation precautions, transmission-based](#)" – "Isolation Precautions, Transmission-based"