

**VANDERBILT  UNIVERSITY**  
**MEDICAL CENTER**

**Policy:** Visitor and Family Presence Guidelines

Policy Number	OP 10-50.02
Chapter	Operations
Effective Date	December 2011
Approval Date	October 2011
Supersedes	October 2009

**Applicable to**

VUH  
  Children’s Hospital  
  VMG  
  VMG Off-site locations  
  VPH  
  VUSN  
  VUSM  
 Other:

**Team Members Performing**

All faculty & staff  
  Faculty & staff providing direct patient care or contact  
  MD  
  House Staff  
  RN  
  LPN  
 Other:

**Lead Author & Content Experts**

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 Nursing Leadership Board – VUH  
 Nursing Leadership Board – Children’s Hospital  
 Patient and Family Advisory Council – VUH  
 Patient and Family Advisory Council- Children’s Hospital

**SPECIFIC EDUCATION REQUIRED:**  
 YES  
 NO  
 If yes, see section on “Additional Competencies Required”

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**I. Purpose:**

To establish guidelines and ensure consistent practices for patient-directed family and visitor presence at Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

**II. Policy:**

Family members are not considered visitors at the hospital and are encouraged to participate as members of the care team to create a familiar caregiving environment and enhance the healing experience. Hospital staff are responsible for the education of visitors regarding expectations for behavior while visiting patients and for monitoring compliance of these expectations.

**III. Definitions:**

- A. Patient is a person under the care of the hospital who has his or her own set of beliefs and habits, and his or her own unique family and support group.
- B. Patient-directed visiting allows access to the patient (24/7), in which the patient, in collaboration with his/her care team, establishes visiting parameters that best suit his/her individual circumstances. In situations where the patient lacks capacity, the patient's health care proxy establishes parameters.
- C. Family is defined by the patient. When the patient is unable to define family, the patient's designated representative provides the definition. Family members are the people who provide the primary physical, psychological, or emotional support for the patient. Family is not necessarily blood relatives. Family members are encouraged to be involved and supportive of the patient and are integral to the overall well-being of the patient.
- D. Visitor is a guest of the patient and family, and is anyone who the patient or proxy determines is significant to his/her well-being, and whose presence enhances his/her patient experience.
- E. Disruptive families or visitors are those who disturb others, infringe upon others' rights and/or safety, or who are medically or therapeutically contraindicated.

#### IV. Specific Information:

##### A. Visitor Badges:

1. Each family member wears a visitor badge or armband while staying with a patient after guest visiting hours (9:00am-9:00 p.m.) The badge is obtained at the nursing station on each unit.
  - a. Family members must be at least 18 years old to stay with a patient after 9:00 p.m.
  - b. A maximum of two family members may stay with a patient overnight.

Note: The charge nurse or the Administrative Coordinator may approve an exception to these limitations when extenuating circumstances so require (parents/legal guardians of a hospitalized child, who are under 18 years of age, or the adolescent child of an adult patient).

2. The designated support person wears a visitor badge while with the patient.
- B. During the hours of 9:00 p.m.-5:00 a.m., family members and visitors are required to enter through the Emergency Department, and be cleared through the security entrance by Security or at the nurses' station by the medical receptionist or a staff member.
- C. Any family or visitor who has experienced fever/chills, sore throat, cough, vomiting or diarrhea in the previous 48 hours is prohibited from visiting.
- D. The hospital accommodates a support individual of the patient's choice, unless the individual's presence infringes on others' rights, safety, or is medically or therapeutically contraindicated. The designated support person chosen by the patient may have 24/7 access to the patient to provide emotional support during the course of the stay. The individual may or may not be the patient's surrogate decision-maker or legally authorized representative. The chosen support person may change as needed during the course of the stay to maintain the health and well-being of the family support.

- E. Refer to the Vanderbilt Psychiatric Hospital (VPH) policy for area specific guidelines.

**V. Procedures:**

- A. Family members are encouraged to actively engage in the patient's hospital experience to ensure the delivery of safe- and patient- and family-centered care.
- B. Family members and visitors collaborate with the nursing staff to coordinate visitation as directed by the patient.
- C. The length of the family members' or visitors' stay is at the discretion of the patient.
- D. The hospital will not restrict, limit or otherwise deny family presence or visitation privileges on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.
- E. Family members and visitors are required to wash their hands before and after spending time with a patient.
- F. Families and visitors whose presence is disruptive or infringes upon others' rights, safety, or who are medically or therapeutically contraindicated will be asked to leave.

**VI. References:**

VUMC Policy Manual. Accessed August 29, 2011 via <https://mcapps.mc.vanderbilt.edu/E-Manual/Hpolicy.nsf>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. CMS Rule 42 CFR Parts 482 and 48. Retrieved September 12, 2011, from: [http://www.cms.gov/CFCsAndCoPs/06\\_Hospitals.asp](http://www.cms.gov/CFCsAndCoPs/06_Hospitals.asp)

The Joint Commission's Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Hospitals (CAMH). Retrieved online September 14, 2011, via Eskind Digital Library (search word "CAMH", then select "Accreditation Requirements") <http://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/diglib/>  
*Rights and Responsibilities of the Individual Standard: RI.01.01.01*

Institute for Patient and Family-Centered Care website Accessed on August 29, 2011, via: <http://www.ipfcc.org/advance/topics/supporting-family-presence.html>

Patient Handbook (Children's Hospital)

Admission Guide (Adult Hospital)

Children's Hospital website:

<http://childrenshospital.vanderbilt.org/interior.php?mid=1423>

Adult Hospital website: <http://www.vanderbilthealth.com/main/19204>

Admission process

## **VII. Endorsement:**

Operations Policy Committee September 2011

Medical Center Medical Board October 2011

Luke Gregory 12-20-11  
Executive Director & CEO  
Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt

David Posch 12-21-11  
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Executive Director, VMG  
President, Vanderbilt Integrated Providers

## **VIII. Approval:**

Marilyn Dubree MSN, RN, NE-BC 12-21-11  
Executive Chief Nursing Officer

C. Wright Pinson MBA, MD 12-21-11  
Deputy Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs  
CEO of the Hospitals and Clinics for VUMC