

 Caring, Innovation Respect, Accountability	GUIDELINE ADDENDUM		Ver. 3.1 Supersedes – 2021-10-29
	Subject: Managing Patient Visits During COVID-19		Category: Administration
Ratified by:	Senior Leadership Team	Effective: Ratified on:	2022-01-14 2022-01-13
Review Facilitator:	Director, Quality, Patient Safety and Risk	Originated on:	2020-07-24
Audience:	All Waypoint Staff	Disclosure Status:	Open
Cross Reference:	See Cross References		

Purpose

Guiding Principles: Safety, Mental, Physical and Emotional Wellbeing, Compassion, Equitable Access, and Flexibility.

To support an approach that balances patient, visitor and staff safety with the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual needs of patients. This approach seeks to balance the risks associated with COVID-19 exposure with the health risks associated with being isolated from visitors (including family, close friends and loved ones). This approach will be regularly evaluated to reflect the changing presence of COVID-19 in the regional and provincial environment, PPE availability and will reflect safety protocols in consideration of the congregate care setting at Waypoint and the vulnerability of some patient populations.

Policy – This guideline is an addendum to Waypoint's [Visitors](#) policy during the COVID-19 Pandemic. See [Visitors](#) policy for more information.

Definitions:

Care Partner: People – family, friends, neighbors, colleagues, community members — who provide critical and often ongoing personal, social, psychological and physical support, assistance and care, without pay, for people in need of support due to frailty, illness, degenerative disease, physical/cognitive/ mental disability, or end of life circumstances.

<u>Essential Care Giver</u>	A person performing essential support services (eg. Food delivery, inspector, maintenance, or health care services) for a person visiting a very ill or palliative resident. (This may include a support worker).
<u>Family:</u>	A patient's circle of support that offers enduring commitment to care for one another, related biologically, emotionally, either culturally or legally. This includes those who the person with lived experience identifies as significant to their well-being.
<u>Visitor</u>	For the purposes of this document, a visitor is defined broadly as any person who is entering Waypoint to be physically present with a patient. Visitors may include, but are not limited to, family members and Care Partners. The patient, if capable, or the substitute decision-maker of a patient who is incapable, will identify who the designated visitor(s) will be.
<u>Designated Visitor</u>	A visitor who has been selected by the patient and added to the approved visitor list.
<u>Full COVID-19 Vaccination Status</u>	An individual who has received a full series of a COVID-19 vaccine authorized by Health Canada or any combination of such vaccines, with the final dose administered at least 14 days prior.
<u>Provincially Recognized Medical Exemption</u>	A form/letter completed by a physician or nurse practitioner which indicates that an individual is unable to receive COVID-19 immunization due to medical reasons.

The Role of Care Partners

Care Partners are those individuals who play an essential partnership role in caring for an individual. As a result their presence and involvement with patients may look different from a regular visitor. Care Partners are identified by the patient and finalized in partnership with the clinical team. When it is safe to do so, and with the input of the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU), Care Partners will be welcomed in the following circumstances:

- Supporting those with critical illness, palliative care, hospice care and end of life,
- Presence paramount to the patient's physical care and mental well-being, including:
 - Assistance with meals
 - Assistance with mobility
 - Assistance with personal care
- Communication assistance for persons with hearing, visual, speech, cognitive, intellectual or memory impairments or those where language/translation support is required,

- Assistance by designated representatives for persons with disabilities,
- Additional situations where essential assistance is deemed to be required by the care team and patient.

Individual programs and their leadership, in consultation with Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC), will determine if/ how they can safely welcome Care Partners and Essential Care Givers beyond what is permitted in the guidelines outlined below. This may include longer visits or visits in alternative locations. This may also include decreasing the required notice for a visit. These procedures are to be determined on a case by case basis with the Care Partner/ Essential Care Giver, the individual program, IPAC and supporting services (eg. Housekeeping) where appropriate. The accommodation of Care Partners and Essential Care Givers is to be done with the utmost care and compassion. This care and compassion must be balanced with the safety and structure of procedures, guidelines and expectations. Decision-making must be a collaborative and transparent process, with results communicated clearly to the Care Partner/ Essential Care Giver and patient.

NOTE: Exceptions that would impact the screening procedure should be communicated to the screening staff, where at all possible, in advance of the scheduled visit.

Risk Management

In order to manage risk, the following principles are to be applied to the management of visitors to the hospital:

- **Elimination** – Physically remove the hazard
- **Substitution** – Replace the hazard
- **Engineering controls** – Isolate people from the hazard, barrier
- **Administrative controls** – Change the way people work
- **Personal protective equipment**– Protect the person with PPE

With these principles as a guide, Waypoint will take a phased approach to visits during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The current phase will be determined and communicated to all staff by the COVID-19 Patient Visits Working Group and approved by senior leadership team (SLT) based on the regional and provincial transmission of COVID-19, personal protective equipment (PPE) availability, the outbreak status of the hospital and consultation/ direction from the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU). The three phases are:

Phase 1 – Most restrictive (widespread community transmission; significant outbreak activity in facility)

Phase 2 – Moderately restrictive (sustained reductions in community transmission; minimal outbreak activity in facility)

Phase 3 – Least restrictive (limited rate of community transmission, no active outbreaks in facility)

Visits will be planned and scheduled in accordance with the relevant phase of visitor restrictions during COVID-19 (see [Phased Approach to Lifting Visitor Restrictions](#)). Changes to the visitor process and/or requirements may occur based on the factors outlined above.

NOTE: As outlined in the [Phased Approach to Lifting Visitor Restrictions](#) visits related to end of life, are permitted during all phases of visitor restrictions.

NOTE: Spiritual and cultural supports are distinct from visitors and subject to case-by-case review by Ethics and Spiritual Care, IPAC and limitations imposed by the SMDHU, the Chief Coroner's Office or the Province of Ontario.

General Visitor Requirements:

- Visitors must be over the age of 18 years of age unless accompanied by someone over the age of 18 (see [Phased Approach to Lifting Visitor Restrictions](#)).
- In-person visits will require the visitor to provide accepted proof of full COVID-19 vaccination status, or provide documentation of a provincially recognized medical exemption from a physician/nurse practitioner. Visitors will be required to provide proof in the form of a government issued vaccine receipt or vaccine passport accompanied by photo identification verifying the visitor's identity (e.g. Drivers license). This documentation is to be presented to the security screener upon entry to the building. For the main campus, security screeners are located on the first floor of the Toanche building at the G4S security desk. For the Bayfield building security screeners are located inside the first set of doors at the main entrance.
- Visitors to the Horizon program may be required to complete additional screening including a rapid COVID-19 antigen test prior to commencing the visit.
- The ability of all visitors to follow infection control practices must be assessed and ensured.
- Cloth masks are not permitted to be worn during the visit. Waypoint approved PPE will be provided at screening station.
- Priority will be given to family of all patients that are palliative, actively passing or have extenuating circumstances in all departments.
- No visitors will be permitted for patients where isolation practices are in place. Patients with extenuating circumstances and Care Partners will be addressed on a case by case basis.
- Visitors who do not pass screening criteria, including verification of full COVID-19 vaccination status or documentation of a provincially recognized medical exemption, will not be permitted to visit, extenuating circumstances subject to review (see [Visitor Appeal Process](#)).
- All healthcare team members are responsible to provide visitors and patients with education and support regarding the outlined expectations and safety measures.

- Patients who are confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19 cannot receive visitors unless under exceptional circumstances (eg. end of life or Care Partners).
- Virtual visits should be encouraged and accommodated where possible.

General Visitor Expectations

The following expectations apply to all visitors:

1. Book visits a minimum of 72 hours in advance with the program they wish to attend.
2. Adhere to no more than two visitors attending inside at a time with exceptions for those experiencing Life Altering Events (see [Phased Approach to Lifting Visitor Restrictions](#)) or in the following circumstances:
 - Visitors who require a support person's assistance due to challenges such as: mobility, vision or cognitive issues.
 - Visitors who require a support person's assistance with language translation.
 See program specific COVID-19 visitor procedures for additional, program specific detail.
3. Read and follow visitor expectations during COVID-19.
4. Arrive at the scheduled time and depart at the end of scheduled visit.
5. Wear the provided approved Waypoint PPE while in the building.
6. Pass through designated COVID-19 screening prior to entering the building. For those visiting the Horizon program, temperature checks are required.
 - a. Perform hand hygiene and don a level 1 procedure mask and face shield at the screening station.
 - b. Answer screening questions asked by security screeners upon entry to the building and provide proof of full COVID-19 vaccination status or provincially recognized medical exemption with accompanying photo identification:
 - i. Negative Screen: Visitor may enter the building.
 - ii. Positive Screen: Visitor MAY NOT enter the building.
7. Any visitor who fails active screening (i.e., having symptoms of COVID-19 and/or having had contact with someone who has COVID-19 or is not fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or does not provide a valid medical exemption) must not be allowed to enter Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care. There is one exception:
 - Visitor(s) who fail screening and are there to visit a patient at **end of life** with high risk of dying within the next two weeks (See [Phased Approach to Visitor Restrictions](#))- the Visitor will be permitted to enter but must wear a medical (surgical/procedural) mask and face shield at all times while in the facility and maintain physical distance of 2 meters (6 feet) from other residents, patients and staff members.
8. Visitors who do not pass screening and wish to challenge the screening decision or make a complaint can follow the [Visitor Appeal Process](#).

9. Wear a Visitor ID Badge for the duration of the visit. ID badges are distributed at the screening stations.
10. Proceed directly from screening to designated visiting area.
11. Adhere to the following requirements:
 - Keep mask on for the duration of the visit ensuring the mask is over both nose and mouth.
 - Keep face shield on for the duration of the visit.
 - Perform hand hygiene upon entering and exiting the designated visiting area.
 - Only visit one patient at the scheduled time.
 - Remain in the designated visiting area for the duration of the visit maintaining physical distancing practices where possible.
 - Adhere to the duration of the scheduled visit.
 - No helping other patients with simple requests such as getting them water or moving personal belongings etc.
 - No bringing in gifts or other items for patients, except for those pre-approved as essential. Food is not permitted. If bringing in an essential item, notify the Social Worker/ Team Leader in advance.
 - Pets are not permitted on site.
 - Visitors are not permitted to use patient washrooms.
 - No wandering around hospital inclusive of the unit visiting on.
 - Maintain physical distancing.
 - Adhere to additional Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) instructions.
 - If a visit is to be cancelled a minimum of 24 hours' notice is requested.

NOTE: Children under two years of age are not counted as a visitor and children under two years of age do not require a mask or face shield. Children under the age of 12 are not required to show proof of vaccination.

Support for Visitors

- Visitors will be provided with a Waypoint approved PPE upon entry to the building.
- Staff will be supported to understand the important role that visits play in the health and wellbeing of patients. They will be expected to support all visitors and ensure they feel welcomed, valued and accommodated.
- Visitors should be offered a visit that is no less than 45 minutes in duration with an allowance for cleaning time (Minimum of 15 minutes) between visitors.
- Staff must endeavor to provide information and education to visitors about their role in supporting safety, Waypoint's policies and procedures, and where appropriate the care of their loved one.

- To facilitate communication between patients and those who are unable to visit. Staff can assist patients to connect with their families using alternate means.
- For patients with limited English proficiency, language lines and translation services must be made available to ensure that visitors understand expectations and safety protocols in place.
- Patients and Family members should be encouraged to utilize the Patient Relations Officer (PRO) for additional support.
- Education will be provided by the care team to support compliance with infection control practices (e.g. PPE and hand hygiene) and physical distancing.

Supporting documents include the following:

- Visitor log
- [Approved Visitor Notification Script](#)
- Waypoint visitor information web page
- Visitor information/ FAQs
- Staff information/ FAQs
- IPAC signage
- Screening script

In-Patient Visitor and Care Partner Process

To support the reinstatement of visitors to Waypoint, the following process will be followed:

1. Each program/ unit to determine the days and times that they can accommodate visits (see [Program Specific Processes](#)).
2. Meet with each patient or Substitute Decision Maker (SDM) and determine who they would like to be identified as their visitors & Care Partner and to inform them of the visitor process, expectations and safety measures in place. Patients may delegate two people as a care partner.
3. Identified Care Partners will be added to patient's designated visitor list and identified in the patient's medical record. Programs will be responsible for maintaining an up to date visitor list for the patients in their care.
4. The clinical manager/delegate, in consultation with the client's most responsible physician will carefully assess each Care Partner request for patient/unit safety and clinical concerns.
5. Program staff will work with the patient to understand their needs, concerns and to identify a plan for their Care Partner. It is understood that Care Partners are essential, and provided that there is not a repeated regression of health due to the presence of the Care Partner, access will not be restricted other than in exceptional circumstances such as an outbreak, an overriding safety concern that cannot be mitigated or other infection prevention and control protocols & safety measures.
6. Unit Social Worker/ Team Lead to phone identified visitor or Care Partners and provide information on Waypoint's visitor process and safety measures using the approved

script (see [Approved Visitor Notification Script](#)). Care partners will additionally be given and will be expected to complete education to support them to safely perform their role and serve as a value-creating member of the care team before entering the unit. Information on how best to effectively communicate with the care team and to provide care to the patient should be provided.

7. Visit booked through unit Social Worker/ Team Lead and tracked on the shared visitor outlook calendar/schedule and communicated to the Forensic Security Office (FSO) or Contract Security Service (G4S).
8. More than one visitor slot may be booked for a single patient as long as this booking allows for equal distribution of visits for all patients, and more than one visit at a time is not booked per program. Only two visitors or Care Partners will still be allowed per visit. All visitors and Care Partners must follow infection prevention and control measures. The room used for visits must be cleaned between each set of visitors. All visits must be booked and approved as per Waypoint's current processes.
9. If the Social Worker/ Team Lead becomes aware that the visitor or Care Partner plans to bring an approved essential item for the patient, they are to notify the Forensic Security Office (FSO) or Contract Security Service (G4S).
10. Housekeeping staff are to be provided with the visitation schedule via the shared visitor calendar in Outlook. Social Worker/ Team Lead are to notify Housekeeping of each cancelled visit.
11. Social Worker/ Team Lead to complete 24 hour pre-screen with visitor or Care Partner during initial touch point with instructions not to visit if COVID-19 symptoms develop or contact is made with suspect positive individual. If this occurs visitor or Care Partner to notify booking Social Worker/ Team Lead. Instructions will be provided to visitor or Care Partner on how to enter hospital through entrance screening as well as where to find visitor information on Waypoint's website.
12. Social Worker/ Team Lead to work with the visitor or Care Partner in the event they require accommodations to ensure the visit can proceed safely.
13. When visitor or Care Partner arrives at the designated entrance screening staff to repeat screener and guide visitor through COVID-19 screening, proper handwashing, and donning of the approved PPE.
14. Program staff meet the visitor or Care Partner at the screening station and escort them to the designated visiting area. On-unit visits are not permitted at this time with the exception of Care Partners and those who are experiencing Life Altering Events as detailed in the [Phased Approach to Lifting Visitor Restrictions](#).
15. Patients are to wear a level 1 surgical mask and face shield for any off-unit visit. Patients should wear PPE as tolerated for on-unit visits with Care Partners.
16. All visits will be monitored by staff members who will be responsible to remind visitors and patients to abide by IPAC guidelines. Staff are to respect the privacy of visits and observe from their observation post during the visit.

17. Hand hygiene is to be performed by visitors and Care Partners before entering and after exiting the visitor room. For Care Partners on the unit, hand hygiene should be performed in alignment with the [Hand Hygiene Policy and Procedure](#).
18. Once visit completed visitor to sign out at the security/ screening station and proceed directly to exit with program staff escort. No wandering permitted.
19. If visit has extended past the allotted time, staff are to notify Manager/ Team Lead. Out of respect for visitors waiting to visit their loved ones in the same room and to control the number of individuals on the unit at once we ask that visiting hours be adhered to. Staff should communicate and work with Care Partners where possible to accommodate duration needs.
20. Staff may call Clinical Manager or security if required to help enforce restrictions. Likewise if visitor chooses not to adhere to expectations visiting rights will be revoked.
21. Once a visit has concluded, Housekeeping will clean the designated visit location and travel route as per IPAC guidelines.

IMPORTANT: Waypoint is committed to a psychologically safe environment for patients, staff, visitors and Care Partners. Waypoint will not tolerate racism, verbal abuse, aggression and/or physical violence and these are grounds for immediate removal of the visitor or Care Partner from the premises.

Program Specific Visitor Procedures

For program specific visitor procedures:

- [Atrium Program \(including Brebeuf\)](#)
- [Regional Programs, including AAP, Sans Souci, Bayview and Georgianwood](#)
- [Horizon Program](#)

Termination of a Visit

In addition to the circumstances laid out in Waypoint's Visitors Policy, if at any time visitors choose not to adhere to expectations listed above their visiting rights will be revoked or visitation restricted by the respective Clinical Manager or Shift Nurse Manager afterhours.

Visitor Appeal Process – see [Visitor Appeal Process](#)

Cross Reference(s)

[Approved Visitor Notification Script](#)

[Phased Approach to Lifting Visitor Restrictions](#)

[Atrium Programs \(including Brebeuf\) COVID Visitor Procedures](#)

[Regional Programs COVID Visitor Procedures](#)

[Horizon Program COVID Visitor Procedures](#)

[Visitor Appeal Process](#)

[Visitors](#)**Reference(s)**

[Access to Hospitals for Essential Visitors - Toronto Areas Hospitals \(Ontario Health\)](#)

[Directive 1 - Health Care Providers and Entities \(Public Health Ontario\)](#)

[Directive 3 – Long Term Care Homes \(Public Health Ontario\)](#)

[Operational Requirements for Health Sector Restart \(Ministry of Health\)](#)

[Person Centred Guidelines for Preserving Family Presence \(Planetree International\)](#)

[Reintegration of Family Caregivers \(Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement\)](#)

[Resuming Visits in Long Term Care Homes \(Ministry of Long Term Care\)](#)

[Visiting Restrictions Discussion \(North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services\)](#)

End of GUIDELINE ADDENDUM

Keywords: visitors; visitor; visit; COVID; pandemic

Initiated: July 24, 2020

Revised: November 24, 2020

April 6, 2021

June 16, 2021

August 31, 2021

October 29, 2021