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| POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL | NUMBER: B-506 |
| POLICY OWNER: Patient Relations Ombudsman/PFAC | EFFECTIVE: December 2016 |
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| | REVIEWED |

Essential Care Partner and Visitor Policy for Queensway Carleton Hospital

PURPOSE

To provide guidance to staff, patients, Essential Care Partners, and the patient's family/friends to facilitate the presence of Essential Care Partners at the bedside while continuing to ensure that patients receive ongoing therapeutic care in a healing environment at the Queensway Carleton Hospital.

To provide guidance to staff and patients' family and friends regarding social visits to the patient while at the Queensway Carleton Hospital.

POLICY STATEMENT

Queensway Carleton Hospital (QCH) has recognized the need for a patient and family centered approach to health care and has prioritized the delivery of health care services around the needs of its patients and their families. QCH supports Essential Care Partner presence and participation at the bedside. Essential Care Partners are identified by the patient or Power of Attorney as individuals that will provide ongoing support and care for the patient during their hospital stay and after discharge. Two Essential Care Partners are welcome at the bedside 24 hours a day, according to the patient's preference.

QCH recognizes the difference between Essential Care Partners and visitors and has collaborated with the QCH Patient and Family Advisory Council regarding this policy. Essential Care Partners are important to provide support, education and help with physical care. They also act as an important communication channel between the health care team and the family.

Queensway Carleton Hospital welcomes 2 Essential Care Partners or visitors at one time at the bedside. We request that visitors be respectful of patients' needs for treatment, therapies and periods of rest to recover from their illness. While there is no set time for visitors, QCH is encouraging them to visit between 10am and 9pm and to check with the patients Essential Care Partner prior to visiting.

Essential Care Partner presence and visitation policies are reviewed at times of increased risk and patient access may be altered based on risk and patient needs (eg. Outbreak situations).

DEFINITIONS

Patient - all individuals who receive health services across the continuum of care at QCH

Family - a relative of the patient or any person (significant other) with whom the patient shares an established relationship

Essential Care Partner- an individual designated by the patient on admission or any time during their hospital experience, whose presence is considered essential to the safety and well-being of the patient while they are in the hospital. This includes emotional and physical support.

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Children - anyone under 14 years of age

Outbreak – an increase in the number of cases (colonized and/or infected) above the number normally occurring in a particular health care setting over a defined period of time. The case definition of an outbreak is defined by Infection Prevention and Control consultation with Ottawa Public Health.

Attending Physician/Intensivist - the physician who has the responsibility and accountability for the medical care of the patient.

Staff - all employees (full, part time, casual), physicians, registered volunteers, students, and affiliates.

Visitor - any person with whom the patient has a relationship, that the patient would like to see.

PROCEDURE

1. Two Essential Care Partners are welcome 24 hours a day according to patients' preference. We encourage Essential Care Partners to go home at night to rest and to take breaks both to eat and to refresh themselves.
2. The names of the Essential Care Partners are obtained from the patient or power of attorney as early as possible in the admission and is noted in the chart and written on the patient care board at the patient bedside. In situations where the patient cannot speak for him or herself, -- or when there is no obvious significant other such as a spouse, life partner, adult child or parent -- hospital staff will make the most appropriate decision possible under the circumstance. Patients may modify their preferences during the hospital experience.
3. Visitors are encouraged to visit between 10 am and 9 pm.
4. Visitors are encouraged to contact the Essential Care Partner prior to visiting to ensure that the patient desires, and is able to have, visitors.
5. As part of the admission process, the assigned nurse will ensure the patient and Essential Care Partner(s) are informed of the policy. Essential Care Partner presence and visitor information will be available in the Unit Patient Handbook and on the QCH website.
6. All Essential Care Partners and visitors must be free of communicable diseases (fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat, rash, vomiting diarrhea) for a minimum of 48hrs and must respect the hospital's infection control practices (hand washing, gowning, gloving and mask use).
7. Essential Care Partners are welcome and encouraged to participate in providing care, as per their level of comfort (and ability to provide safe care), as desired and as specified by the patient. Nurses and other health care team members will be providing guidance to patients and Essential Care Partners during the hospital stay about how to care for the patient upon discharge. They will also provide guidance on how to honour privacy and be respectful of other patients and family in close proximity.
8. There may be times when the Essential Care Partners may be asked to temporarily leave the room if their roommate requires immediate life saving measures or when a private/sensitive discussion needs to occur.

9. To facilitate communication, the Essential Care Partners should be the point of contact with other family members and visitors for updates regarding the patient's condition, the patient's wishes for visitors and the visiting hours.
10. Children under 14 years of age are welcome and must be always supervised by an adult. The patient or QCH staff will not be responsible for the supervision of children under 14 years of age. Younger children may be developmentally unable to remain with the patient for lengthy periods of time, shorter visits may be better for both parties. Note that if the patient requires visitors to wear personal protective equipment (PPE), QCH may not have PPE for children under 14 years of age. Alternative arrangements will be required.
11. Disruptive behavior and unsafe practices are not acceptable and will be addressed directly and promptly. Any form of aggressive behavior (including verbal abuse) will not be tolerated. Protection Services and/or Police will be called, and the person(s) will be directed to leave.
12. Essential Care Partner/ visitor guidelines may be changed or suspended at any time according to the hospital's policies and procedures for addressing disease outbreak and other emergency situations in the hospital. In this event, the hospital will do its best to communicate the change to the patients and the community at large in a timely and effective manner.

APPENDICES

A. Appendix: Visiting at Queensway Carleton Hospital – fact sheet for website to guide visitors.

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[Ontario Hospital Association. Essential Care Partner Presence Policies During COVID 19, Considerations for Hospitals. September 2021](#)

APPENDIX A

Visiting at Queensway Carleton Hospital

The Queensway Carleton Hospital is proud to be a patient and family centered hospital. The recovery of your family member or friend is our primary concern. Our visiting hours reflect the needs of our patients: to rest, to take part in care and treatment, and to have the support of family and friends. Queensway Carleton Hospital welcomes two Care Partners or visitors at any one time at the bedside with the exception of Day Surgery Unit and Post Anesthesia Unit where space and the nature of the care limits this to one care partner.

Types of Visitors

- Care Partner- A visitor designated by the patient or substitute decision maker, as a person who is important to them. They should be someone who is deeply involved in the patient's health care journey and is integral to the overall well-being of the patient. The designated Care Partner is welcome to be at the bedside at all times be always at the bedside.

- Visitor- A guest of the patient or family who wants to provide well wishes and social connections. They may be a friend or relative of the patient or family.

Up to two Care Partners or visitors are welcome to stay at the patient's bedside at QCH 24 hours a day, however visitors are encouraged to visit between 1000 and 2100

Patient/family spokesperson- To help with communication of information, Queensway Carleton Hospital recommends that the patient or substitute decision maker choose a family member or Care Partner to act as their spokesperson. The spokesperson's role includes telling friends and family about the visiting guidelines and serving as a first contact for any questions on the patient's condition.

Please do not visit the patient if you feel, unwell or have:

- Cough
- Fever
- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- Diarrhea
- Recent contact with chicken pox, or measles

Clean your hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer frequently to stop the spread of infectious. Clean your hands when:

- Entering and exiting the hospital
- Entering and exiting the patient's room
- Touching the patient or his/her surroundings.

Visitor Etiquette

1. Please keep your visits short to approximately 20 minutes.
2. Please be respectful of the patient's roommate's need for privacy, rest and recovery. You may be asked to leave the room while a healthcare provider is talking with the patient about their care.
3. Children under 14 years of age must be always supervised by an adult (not the patient). Children should be prepared for the hospital environment and the patient's illness.
4. Please check with the patient or Care Partner prior to visiting to ensure that the patient is up to having visitors and that it does not conflict with the patient's times for therapy or tests.
5. Please follow the infection control guidelines post on the door. If you are unsure of what to do, talk to the Nurse prior to entering the room.
6. Please do not wear scented products or bring scented products to the hospital.

Care Partner Etiquette

- Please use the public washrooms, not the washroom in the patient's room.
- Please keep noise to a minimum. Use headphones when listening to music or watching TV.
- During the night, use minimal lighting.
- It is important for Care Partners to be rested however, if you are staying the night, please provide your own blankets and pillows.
- Please do not wear scented products or bring scented products to the hospital.

Queensway Carleton Hospital endeavors to provide each patient with safe, high-quality care and must ensure a safe environment for our patients, staff, volunteers and members of the public at all times. For everyone's safety and protection we have a Violence Prevention Program. The Queensway Carleton Hospital does not permit any kind of violent or aggressive behavior. If a Care Partner or visitor becomes aggressive or violent, they may be asked to leave. Please note, that there may be times that we need to restrict visitors to the hospital, for example, when a patient's condition warrants, or when other factors such as an outbreak require that visitors be limited.