

# MEMO

**To: All Staff and Physicians**

**From: Infection Prevention and Control**

**Date: September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022**

**Subject: Reminders about Visitation**

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**Pembroke Regional Hospital is currently in low visitor restrictions. This means:**

- Two individuals (visitors or essential caregivers) can be present at the bedside at the same time
- Visitors do not need to be scheduled or pre-identified by the patient. Patients and visitors are encouraged to determine and coordinate who should be present at the bedside.
- As always, every patient can identify an Essential Caregiver who will have access to that patient even if a visitor is present. They should be identified by the patient to their clinical team.
- For outpatients, an Essential Caregiver may be permitted if they can be safely accommodated
- For the Emergency Department, one person can accompany the patient

**All visitors and essential caregivers are expected to comply with the following policies:**

- Must pass self-screening upon entry and must not be showing signs of any COVID-19 symptoms
- Must wear a hospital supplied mask at all times (including at the patient's bedside) and any other required personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Must follow COVID-19 safety guidelines as outlined by the staff for the duration of their visit
- Visitors are permitted during regular hours of visitation (11:30am- 8:30pm daily)
- **Only one caregiver per patient is permitted on a unit if it is on outbreak**

## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND ISSUES MANAGEMENT**

Visitors and essential caregivers must comply with Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) and PPE requirements once inside the Hospital. In circumstances where there is a lack of adherence, individuals may be asked to leave. This will be up to the discretion of the health care team in consultation with the unit Manager/ Director. Continued non-adherence may result in a temporary suspension of access.

**For conflict resolution and issues related to the visitor rules and PPE compliance, follow these steps:**

1. Provide education and reminders about PRH policy and health and safety requirements. Encourage the individual to speak with any member of the care team. Try to address the concerns and educate on requirements.
2. Refer the patient or caregiver to the Manager and/or Director for the clinical unit if they feel their concerns have not been addressed by the care team or for ongoing issues with PPE non-compliance.
3. If resolution is not found, the manager/ director will escalate the concern to the Visitor Committee

## **FAQ's to Support Conversations with Visitors/ Essential Caregivers:**

### **Why is masking still required at PRH?**

All of our visitors, volunteers, and essential care partners must wear a medical-grade mask at all times— this is important to protect the vulnerable patients in our care.

There are a number of reasons that masking requirements remain in effect for healthcare settings even as they have been eased elsewhere. Wearing a mask in the hospital helps:

- **Protect the visitor/ caregiver.** While PRH makes every attempt to reduce risk, visitors and caregivers are more likely to come into contact with a COVID-19 positive person in a health care environment. Wearing a mask helps protect the visitor/ caregiver from becoming infected with COVID-19 if others are sick.
- **Protect others.** Our patients, staff and other visitors may be more at risk of developing serious complications if they are exposed to COVID-19. Wearing a mask makes it less likely you'll spread the virus if you have it, especially if you aren't feeling or showing symptoms.

### **Why is visitation restricted on outbreak units?**

If a unit is experiencing an outbreak, there will be increased visitor restrictions on that unit to ensure the safety of patients, staff and Essential Caregivers. This means that, in some cases, visitors may not be allowed on that particular unit. Before coming to the hospital we suggest that all visitors and essential caregivers review the PRH website for notification of units experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks and the level of visitor restrictions.

### **Why are only two individuals allowed at the patient's bedside during low pandemic restrictions?**

The health and safety of our patients, staff and community remain a top priority.

PRH continues to limit the physical presence of visitors and essential caregivers during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic to maintain physical distancing and to reduce the risk of exposure to patients, visitors/ caregivers, and staff.

### **Why is additional Personal Protective Equipment Required for Visitors/ Essential Caregivers?**

Visitors and essential caregivers visiting patients who are on additional precautions will be required to wear additional PPE; this may include eye protection, gown and gloves. The additional PPE is required in order to protect the caregiver/ visitor from the spread of infectious viruses/ diseases.

It is important to educate visitors/ caregivers on PPE requirements (including how to read signage) and appropriate donning and doffing techniques.

**Refer to the "COVID-19 Caregiver and Visitor Policy" for more information and exceptions to the above information.**