

## SFVAHCS Visitor Policy (December 16, 2020)

To protect our patients, employees and trainees, the following visitor policy is in effect at the San Francisco VA Medical Center (SFVAMC) and at our community-based outpatient clinics.

- No visitors will be allowed to the San Francisco VA Medical Center, including Building 200, Building 203, Building 208 (Community Living Center); Building 200D (Emergency Department), Building 9 (Hoptel), and all community-based outpatient clinics and locations health care system-wide.
- Veterans without scheduled appointments requesting to visit the Canteen or Retail Store will not be allowed entry.
- **For service animals, refer to MCM 00-58, Service Animal Policy**
- Social workers and other team members will work to support families through patient illness, and utilize video communication options when available

**No visitors are permitted for COVID patients**

### Visitor Policy Exceptions for NON COVID patients:

**VERY limited exceptions** will be made to the visitor policy in the following circumstances:

#### Inpatient Visitors

- are allowed on a case-by-case basis:
  - for seriously ill patients (non-COVID-19 or PUI patients) who are expected to die within a short period of time (i.e. days).
  - for inpatients with physical and/or cognitive conditions when a companion is essential to ensure the veteran is able to engage with care, and communication cannot be accomplished by phone.
- EXEMPTION PROCESS: an *attending physician* may place a “COMPANION INPT AUTH COVID EXEMPTION” note in CPRS when an exception should be made.
- No more than two visitors TOTAL may be authorized per patient. Visitors may not be present at the same time. Visits must be one at a time and must be kept short (1 hour or less, and one visit per day). When patients share a room, both may not have visitors at the same time.
- Visitors must not:
  - have symptoms of illness (fever, runny nose, cough, or shortness of breath).
  - be under the age of 18.
  - Wait in clinic or hospital buildings while patients are undergoing procedures or surgeries.
- Visitors must:
  - Enter through Building 200 between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Outpatient visitors must enter through Building 200 and are allowed for:

- Patients requiring a family member/caregiver to receive discharge or post-op instructions, which *cannot* be given via telephone.
- One family member/caregiver allowed during the discharge process. Visitors must be on the daily list of allowed visitors.
- Outpatients with physical and/or cognitive conditions, disruptive behavior, altered mental status, developmental delays (where the caregiver provides safety), or where a companion is key to their stabilization. One visitor per patient.
- PERMISSION PROCESS FOR OUTPATIENT VISITORS:
  - Clinical staff must place a “COMPANION OUTPT AUTH COVID EXEMPTION” CPRS note in advance of patient visits AND in advance of a laboratory or radiology appointment for those requiring a companion.
  - If a patient/caregiver requests an exemption at single entry and no authorization is present in CPRS, screeners should contact the clinic where the patient is scheduled for an on-the-spot authorization.
- Visitors may not wait in hospital or clinic buildings for family members who are undergoing procedures

#### CLC

- CLC visitor policy is determined by national VA guidelines. Current visitor exceptions are for patients at end of life with estimated prognosis of < 48 hours. One visitor at a time per patient.

To prevent patients and staff from exposure, visitors permitted to enter the health care system must follow the required precautions below:

- Participate in checkpoint screenings.
- Maintain 6 feet of distance from others.
- Perform hand hygiene as directed.
- Wear surgical masks and recommended personal protective equipment.
- Follow directions of VA employees.
- Keep visits as short as possible.
- No Emergency Department visitors except at the discretion of the licensed independent provider and charge nurse in accordance with the guidance above
- Food and gift deliveries will be dropped off outside the facility. Staff should meet the delivery personnel by either entrance of Building 200 or 203.
- Veterans whose purpose is to visit the Canteen or Retail Store will not be allowed entry.
- If any case involves multiple visitors, instruct all extra visitors to wait outside of SFVA buildings and preferably in their own car to permit 1 visitor at a time in the hospital. An exception would be for frail visitors who require a single companion to help with mobility.
- Visitors may not wait in hospital or clinic waiting rooms while patients are undergoing procedures or surgeries. Limited space is available for visitors in the Hoptel.

#### **Visitor Policy Enforcement**

- All visitors will be expected to follow appropriate masking, PPE, and visitor hour requirements.
- A staff member who discovers a visitor in violation of visitor policy will ask the visitor to correct procedures for masking, PPE, visiting times, etc.
- If there is non adherence to policies, the Unit Director will be notified and the situation will be escalated as needed through the Unit Manager, Charge Nurse, and Nursing Supervisor.
- If continued non-adherence to visitor policy, Code Green or VA Police may be called to assist