

Title: Visitation – Hospice Inpatient Unit



Policy #: 4626 Approved Date: 07/23/2025 Page 1 of 3

Version: 4 Reviewed Date: 07/23/2025 Revision Date: 07/18/2025

Division: Empath Hospice Division Chapter: Care Centers and Hospice Houses

Approved by: Tarrah Lowry
Interim President of Trustbridge
Owner: Jessica Stevenson
Director Care Centers - Regional Hospice Programs

Policy:

Patients receiving care in a hospice inpatient unit (IPU) have the right to receive visitors and to designate an essential caregiver. The IPU does not restrict visitors at any time unless so requested by the patient or the patient's legal representative. The hospice may suspend in-person visitation of a specific visitor if the visitor violates the hospice's policy and procedure.

Procedure:

1. Visitation is allowed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, at a minimum to include those designated as essential caregivers by the patient or legal representative.
2. The patient or legal representative may identify a family member, friend, guardian, or other individual as their essential caregiver. The designated essential caregiver is not required to provide necessary care to a patient.
3. Accommodation will be made in the patient's room for the visitor who wishes to stay overnight.
4. In-person visitation must be allowed, unless the patient objects, for the following reasons:
 - a. end-of-life situations;
 - b. for patients who are struggling with the change in environment or lack of in-person support;
 - c. when a patient is making a major medical decision;
 - d. when a patient is experiencing emotional distress or grief;
 - e. when a patient needs encouragement or cueing with eating or drinking;
 - f. when a patient who used to talk and interact with others is speaking less;
 - g. the patient is a child in pediatric care.
5. Staff is consulted prior to allowing visitors to enter a patient's room when signage is posted on the patient's door for infection prevention purposes. Personal protective equipment (PPE) and education will be provided to visitors as needed. Required PPE must be worn by visitors.
6. Hospice does not require social distancing between patients and visitors. Consensual physical contact between a patient and visitor is permitted.
7. The IPU will not require visitors to submit proof of any vaccination or immunization.

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8. Visitors will be monitored for obvious signs of illness and screened per Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines applicable to hospice inpatient units. Visitors who appear to be ill may be asked to return when illness has resolved.
9. Children may visit 24 hours/day accompanied by an adult. Family is encouraged to bring toys/activities for children while they visit. Children must be closely supervised at all times.
10. Staff's access to and care of the patient is of primary importance and cannot be restricted by visitors.
11. Alcohol consumption by visitors is prohibited.
12. All Hospice properties are smoke free. This includes the use of vaping products.
13. Weapons are not permitted within any IPU.
14. Visitors exhibiting inappropriate or threatening behavior, or not adhering to stated guidelines, may be asked to leave and may be prohibited from visiting.
15. Hospices that have general inpatient tenant agreements in the community will collaborate with those facilities to ensure visitation for hospice patients and adherence with the hospice's visitation policies.
16. The IPU Manager is responsible for ensuring staff adherence to visitation policies.

Additional Guidelines for Isolation Patients in the Hospice IPU

1. Visitations may be limited for the safety of patient, staff, and/or visitors by the IPU management. Family members may visit patients in the IPU isolation designated rooms.
2. Visitors are expected to comply with infection control measures and safety practices while visiting. PPE, and other infection control protocols for visitors will be communicated. Required PPE is provided by the IPU.
3. The patient will have appropriate space to receive visitors in comfort and privacy based on the isolation restrictions set by IPU management to ensure safety of patients/visitors/staff.
4. Staff will assist patients and designated representative(s) in restricting visitations, as requested or required, to allow the patient to be comfortable.
5. Training on PPE must be completed prior to entering the isolation room. PPE must be worn at all times in the isolation room. Staff will train all visitors on how to don and doff PPE and will answer any questions they may have.

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Visitation Complaints:

For complaints regarding visiting loved ones, notify any IPU staff member of your complaint and ask them to record it for submission, or you may submit the complaint by calling the Empath Health Quality Feedback line at 888-391-0116.

You may also contact the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) for further review and action online at www.ahca.myflorida.com/visitation.