



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Increasing vaccination rate allows hospitals to adjust regional visitation policy**

*Hospitals continue visitation policy with added flexibility for patients and families*

**(DAYTON, OH)** – Members of the Greater Dayton Area Hospital Association (GDAHA) have adjusted visitor restrictions to increase visitation to two visitors per patient where growing vaccination rates and county-specific positivity rates warrant flexibility. Hospitals in GDAHA's 11-county service area have updated visitor restrictions to respond to the increasing vaccination rates across the region. This change allows hospitals to meet the needs of patients and families during the ongoing management of COVID-19.

GDAHA member hospitals will implement the updated visitor restrictions policy on Monday, April 5, 2021.

"Our hospitals are continuing to adapt to the changing nature of COVID-19 and the responsibility to safeguard the patients in their care. As vaccination rates continue to improve across our region, we have an opportunity to bolster the healing process for patients and families by allowing two visitors per patient," said Sarah Hackenbracht, President & CEO of the Greater Dayton Area Hospital Association.

In the region's outpatient, ambulatory, emergency department, and hospital facilities, patients will be permitted two (2) support person for the duration of a patient's stay. Visitors will not be permitted for outpatient testing, such as non-invasive radiology testing, routine x-rays, and lab studies. Anyone under the age of 18 will also not be permitted to visit unless they are the parent or legal guardian of a pediatric patient. Exceptions to the regional visitation policy are as follows:

- "End of Life" situations.
- For maternity patients, one (1) additional support person, such as a doula, will be permitted.
- For minor maternity patients, a parent or guardian will also be permitted.
- Minor patients (under 18 years of age) may have two (2) visitors in the emergency department and inpatient setting, but this is limited to only parents or guardians.
- NICU patients will be allowed two (2) visitors for the duration of the patient's stay. Confirmed COVID-19 mothers and partners should not visit NICU infants while able to transmit COVID-19.
- Patients who require assistance due to mobility, reorienting/confusion (patient safety), interpretation, court-ordered, or healthcare decision making may have one (1) additional assistance person.
- Visitation for confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases (unless above criteria met) will be addressed based on clinical care guidance and available personal protective equipment to ensure visitation can occur safely.

Hospitals remain in agreement on previously established screening guidelines and universal masking policies. The previously established screening and mask guidelines are as follows:

- All employees, staff, patients, and visitors will be screened for symptoms or exposure history.
- Screening is also being done at selected community ambulatory facilities.
- Visitors will be asked to leave the facility if they have had symptoms or a positive test in the past 10 days or exposures in the last 14 days.
- If the visitor is a driver for a patient and space is not available in the patient room or waiting room, the visitor may be asked to wait in their car until the patient's appointment is completed.
- Employees, staff, patients, and visitors must wash their hands, or use hand sanitizer, before and after leaving rooms and hospital buildings.
- Visitors should wear a mask when in the common areas of the hospital facility, such as hallways, public restrooms, gift shops, and dining areas.
- Visitors will be asked to wear their mask when a caregiver is present in a patient room.
- Patients and visitors may provide and wear their own mask or will be required to accept and wear the mask provided by the hospital facility.
- Masks or facial coverings must fully cover the nose and mouth.
- If a visitor refuses to wear a mask, visitors may be asked to leave the facility.
- Exceptions may be made on an individual basis for those individuals who are unable to wear a mask due to health or disability issues.

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"GDAHA's member hospitals are committed to protecting the health of our patients. Collectively, we encourage everyone to 'stay the course' by following current public health recommendations to control the transmission of COVID-19 in our communities," Hackenbracht continued. "Additionally, the COVID-19 vaccine is available to everyone and appointments are available in communities across the Dayton region. Getting everyone vaccinated against COVID-19 is a critical component to control its spread and reopen our communities."

*The Greater Dayton Area Hospital Association (GDAHA) is a member-service organization representing 29 hospitals and health systems in the Dayton region. GDAHA collaborates with its members to improve the delivery of healthcare services in Auglaize, Butler, Darke, Champaign, Clark, Greene, Miami, Montgomery, Preble, Shelby, and Warren Counties in West Central Ohio.*

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