



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hospitals Refine Visitor Restrictions as COVID-19 Continues

(DAYTON, OH) – Greater Dayton Area Hospital Association members continue to enforce a regional visitor restrictions policy to limit the spread of COVID-19, but announced updates on Thursday, Feb. 11, as the pandemic evolves.

Because of the widespread nature of COVID-19 in our communities, visitor restrictions remain in place to maintain patient safety in member hospitals throughout GDAHA's 11-county service area, despite a decline in hospitalizations.

"Hospitals are continuing to adapt and respond to the changing nature of COVID-19 in our region," said Lisa Henderson, Vice President of Health Initiatives of the Greater Dayton Area Hospital Association. "The additional flexibility of allowing one visitor at a time per the updated regional visitor restrictions will allow families to better engage in the care and recovery of individuals receiving care from one of our member hospitals."

In the region's outpatient, ambulatory, emergency department, and hospital facilities, patients will be permitted one (1) support person in the building at a time, provided that adequate social distancing policies can be met. Patients are encouraged to check with individual providers to ensure they are clear on their provider's policy as some may differ.

Additional clarification has been added to prohibit visitation in neonatal intensive care units if the mother or partner is COVID-19 positive and still able to transmit the virus. Visitation from COVID-19 positive persons or symptomatic individuals awaiting test results will also not be permitted. Hospitals in the region are adhering to the Centers for Disease Control's symptom and time-based guidance for COVID-19 transmission.

- The following visitation exceptions may apply:
 - "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 with one visitor allowed at a time. 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.
 - No visitors for confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases (unless above criteria met).

Visitors will not be permitted for confirmed or suspected COVID-19 patients in the hospital unless the patient meets one of the above exceptions. Visitors will not be permitted if they are COVID-19 positive or symptomatic and awaiting COVID-19 test results.

In conjunction with the updated visitation restrictions, screening questions and the universal masking policy also remain in place to consistently protect patients and hospital personnel during the ongoing management of COVID-19. GDAHA and the region's hospitals support Governor DeWine's statewide approach to masking to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in community settings and have upheld a universal masking policy across all our region's healthcare facilities since May 2020.

"We are hopeful to see this trend in declining hospitalizations continue. And with the vaccine rollout continuing over the course of the next several months, are hopeful that this means new things for the spring and summer," Henderson said. "These measures will help our hospitals continue to provide the safe and secure environment our patients need to recover."

These guidelines are provided to our area institutions based on the overall COVID-19 incidence and prevalence in our area at this time. Please be advised that individual local institutions and their parent health care systems each have their unique clinical situations and their visitation policies may differ from our general assessment and recommendations.

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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