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**Owner:** *Laura Vaneps: Chief Nursing Officer*  
**Policy Area:** *Emergency Preparedness*  
**References:**

## Visitor Policy Secondary to Pandemic COVID-19

**PURPOSE:** In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Bigfork Valley, in association with the Minnesota Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, has recommended temporary visiting hours and restrictions, effective IMMEDIATELY.

### GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. ALL visitors must check in at the screening stations (Tamarack, Villa, Main Hospital or ER Entrance) and will be asked the following questions:
  - a. Have you had a fever, or do you feel sick?
  - b. Have you traveled within the last 14 days? If yes, where?
  - c. Have you been in close contact with someone who is positive for COVID-19?
2. Visitors will be screened for symptoms of COVID-19, which include fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, fatigue, congestion, and/or loss of taste or smell. Other less common symptoms include gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. If visitors have symptoms or fever they will not be allowed to enter the facility.
3. Universal Source Control Masking is being followed- which means everyone two years of age and older entering the facility will be required to wear a mask (cloth or surgical) for the duration of their visit in order to be granted access to the facility.

### HOSPITAL LOCATION

1. Two (2) visitors may accompany or visit a patient in the hospital at a time and must be screened at the front entrance between the hours of **7:00 am until 5:00 pm** with unrestricted visiting hours. The visitors are to remain in patient rooms with masks on during the duration of their visit. Additional family members or friends will not be allowed to enter the facility or wait in lobbies or common areas. This includes hallways, bathrooms, cafeteria, and any other areas located within the hospital, to include nursing home, assisted living, and ambulatory clinics.
2. Exemptions to visitor restrictions may be considered if the patient is not hospitalized for COVID-19 during end-of-life situations based on medical staff documentation and approval. If the patient is hospitalized for end-of-life care and is positive for COVID-19, visitors will not be allowed in their room. Virtual visitation may be scheduled if requested. Clergy may be allowed in patient's room for last rites given adequate supply of PPE.

### OUTPATIENT LOCATIONS

1. Only two (2) visitors may accompany each patient to an outpatient visit, unless an aide or assistant is required. Waiting Rooms have been arranged to promote social distancing. Each department has developed a plan detailing how they will manage crowd control if increased visitors are allowed to accompany scheduled patients (i.e. have visitor waiting in exam room instead of waiting area).

**EMERGENCY ROOM LOCATION**

1. **Adult patient** - Only one (1) person may accompany or visit a patient in the ER at a time. Based on the clinical team's judgment, more than one visitor may be permitted.
2. **Pediatric patient** – Two (2) visitors are allowed at a time. Based on the clinical team's judgment, additional visitors may be allowed.

**NURSING HOME / ASSISTED LIVING**

1. Restrictions are in place for ALL visitors, with exceptions for end-of life, and compassionate care visitation. Visitors must be at least 12 years of age and older to enter the LTC facility. Visitors are asked to call prior to visiting so they may be pre-screened prior to their visit.
2. All visitors entering Nursing Home or Assisted Living must be screened upon entering. Temperature readings are required prior to entry and visitors to LTC should enter through the Tamarack screening station.
3. New "Resident/Tenant Outdoor Visits Policy" [https://pstat-live-media.s3.amazonaws.com/pdf\\_cache/policy/8250939/6f3e15ec-19fe-4ded-a2a3-b3c5e0ef41a6/Resident-Tenant%20Outdoor%20Visits.pdf](https://pstat-live-media.s3.amazonaws.com/pdf_cache/policy/8250939/6f3e15ec-19fe-4ded-a2a3-b3c5e0ef41a6/Resident-Tenant%20Outdoor%20Visits.pdf)

People with disabilities must have reasonable access to support personnel in a manner that is consistent with disability rights, laws and the health and safety of patients, health care providers and support persons.

These temporary visiting restrictions will continue until further notice and have been put in place because the safety of our patients and caregivers are our highest priority.

In conjunction with other hospitals, nursing homes, and assisted living facilities, we strongly encourage family and friends to use alternative methods of communication with patients, residents, tenants, caregivers and family members through virtual means, including ZOOM, Skype, FaceTime, and/or phone.

All revision dates:

07/2021, 07/2020, 06/2020, 03/2020

**Attachments**

[Resident-Tenant Outdoor Visits.pdf](#)

**Approval Signatures**

Step Description	Approver	Date
	Aaron Saude: Chief Executive Officer	07/2021
	Laura Vaneps: Chief Nursing Officer	07/2021
	Aaron Saude: Chief Executive Officer	07/2021
	Sandra LeBlanc-Boland: Emergency Preparedness Coordinator	07/2021

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	Laura Vaneps: Chief Nursing Officer	07/2021

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