



State of Vermont
Agency of Human Services
Office of the Secretary
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Michael K. Smith, *Secretary*

March 14, 2020

Pursuant to Executive Order 01-20, Declaration of State of Emergency in Response to COVID-19 and National Guard Call-Out, effective immediately the Agency of Human Services has developed the following minimum standard for visitation policies and procedures for all hospitals throughout Vermont.

All hospitals are directed to develop a policy for their facility which shall be no less restrictive than the standards developed in the following guidance. These policies and procedures for visitation shall be in place from now until changed, or the expiration of the Executive Order on April 15.

Agency of Human Services

COVID-19 Policy Change: Hospital Visitor/Welcoming Policy Directives Effective Immediately

We know family members and loved ones play a key role in supporting and comforting those who are sick and ill, however, as we seek to prevent the spread of COVID-19, we are making temporary changes to our Visitor/Welcoming policy to protect the health of our employees and patients.

To protect our workforce and patients, the following individuals are restricted from entering to visit patients in our facilities at this time:

- Those with any flu-like symptoms. These symptoms include runny nose, fever, cough and respiratory congestion.
- Those who have traveled to high-risk countries outside of the United States in the past 14 days.
- Anyone who has had close contact with an individual who is being ruled out or was diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Children under the age of 16.

Acute Care:

- Patients will be limited to two designated visitors who may visit throughout the course of their hospital stay.
- Each affiliate will implement entry control points in their hospitals to enable the screening of all individuals entering their facilities.
- Visitors are strongly encouraged to remain in the patient's room for the duration of the visit and avoid congregating in waiting rooms, cafeterias and lobbies before, after or between visits.
- In-room visits with patients suspected of having COVID-19 or test positive for COVID-19 will not be permitted. We will make every effort to support patient and family interaction by deploying the use of technology.
- Hospital volunteer programs are suspended until further notice.
- Only ADA service animals can accompany family members/support people. All other animals, including previously approved therapy dogs and support animals, are not allowed at this time.
- Exceptions to this policy may be made in extenuating circumstances, including but not limited to visiting patients and residents receiving end-of-life care.

Emergency Department and Express/Urgent Care:

- All patients and family members entering Emergency Departments or Express Care/Urgent Care will be screened upon entry into the facility.
- Anyone presenting with symptoms is required to wear a mask.
- No visitors are allowed for patients suspected of having COVID-19 or test positive for COVID-19.
- For pediatric patients one dedicated family member will be permitted to stay with the patient.

- Adults are permitted one family/support person.
- Note: This policy will be modified on a case by case basis for unique circumstances.

Outpatient Clinics:

- All patients will be screened upon arrival to their clinic visit.
- Wherever possible, family members/support persons who accompany patients should be limited to one person.
- Family members/support persons who are sick, especially with respiratory symptoms should not accompany patients to their visit.