



## BASSETT HEALTHCARE NETWORK VISITATION/SUPPORT PERSON POLICY

In accordance with the New York State Department of Health (NYS-DOH) COVID-19 Hospital Visitation Program, patients in the Bassett Healthcare Network are allowed to have person(s) at the bedside in a limited capacity as defined below. Please pay special attention to the instructions below as support persons and visitation guidelines vary by unit.

**COVID+ or Under Precautions (for COVID):** At this time, we are allowing two visitors. Stipulations include:

- Only between the hours of 8:00 AM – 8:00 PM
  - Anything outside of these hours has to be approved by the Nurse Manager of the floor
- Full PPE (surgical mask, gown, and gloves) must be worn at all times. This is to include once you are in the patients room. Someone will assist you in putting it on. If PPE is removed while in the room, the visitor will be asked to leave.
- You will not be allowed to leave the room once you have entered. This is to include going to the cafeteria, going outside, etc. If you do leave the room, you will not be allowed to re-enter and must leave the facility for the day.
- May be interchangeable day to day; however, the two selected per day have to remain the same.

If any of these rules are not followed, visitation will be revoked and you will be asked to leave the facility.

Keeping everyone safe is our top priority.

*Any Bassett Healthcare Network facility may suspend visitation at any time it is deemed to be warranted (e.g. personal protective equipment [PPE] availability, medical necessity, refusing to wear appropriate PPE, not following any of the guidance listed below, etc.).*

**Review of complaints regarding visitation:** If a patient, visitor, or support person have a complaint about Bassett Healthcare Network's visitation protocol, please reach out Patient Representative Services at (607) 547-3912. All decisions resulting from facilitated conversations will require final approval from Nursing Leadership and the Bassett Healthcare Network Administrator-on-Call (AOC).

### Summary

This policy is intended to outline rules and restrictions for visitor and support person as a general principle. However, extenuating circumstances may require review and exception by Nurse Manager or Nursing Leadership. The Bassett Healthcare Network Visitor Policy has been established to ensure that patients have access to their designated visitors, and that these visitors comply with procedures that promote patient and visitor safety. Patients (or support person designated by patient, where appropriate) have the right to receive visitors whom he or she designates, including, but not limited to, a spouse, a domestic partner, another family member, or a friend, and his or her right to withdraw or deny consent at any time.



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### Visitor Definition

A **visitor** is defined as a person for whom a patient grants permission to enter their care area as a companion (hospital, Emergency Department, outpatient, Birthing Center, long-term care, etc.) for a limited duration of time. A visitor is someone who is 12 years of age or older.

### Support Person Definition

A **support person** is defined as a person who is deemed medically essential to the care of a patient by Nursing Leadership. The Support Person(s) are selected by the patient, or if applicable, the patient's healthcare proxy, or other designated legal entity. A support person is someone who is 18 years of age or older.

### Protective Measures for Visitors/Support Persons:

Health care providers will discuss the potential risks and benefits of a visitor's presence with both the resident and the visitor, if possible. Per guidance from the New York State Department of Health, "All personnel, regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status, in a healthcare setting (i.e. facilities or entities regulated under Articles 28, 36, and 40 of the Public Health Law) should wear an appropriate face mask according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic." Meaning, masking requirements are dictated by CDC recommendation and transmission levels in the area.

### Visitors/Support Persons will:

- Enter through the facility main entrance.
- Perform hand hygiene
- If masking requirements are in place, you must have your mask on the entirety of the visit, to include being in the patients room. Failure to comply with hospital policy will result in visitation restrictions.
- The WellScreen kiosks will ask you a series of questions and take your temperature
- Follow the prompts to successfully print out visitor badge with patient room number on it.
- Complete screening procedures, including:
  - Symptom screening for the prior five days (e.g., fever, sore throat, runny nose, cough, shortness of breath, muscle aches, or diarrhea).
  - Temperature check prior to entering the clinical area
  - If applicable, wear appropriate face coverings and PPE. This will be dependent on CDC Guidance and transmissions levels. If masking protocols are in place and visitors/support persons are not in compliance, visitation can be revoked.

### Sign In Procedure:

- Sign in on the WellScreen kiosk and undergo temperature screening and COVID questionnaire.
- Follow the prompts to successfully print out visitor badge with patient room number on it.
- Perform meticulous hand hygiene and receive instructions on how to wear appropriate PPE throughout the visit.
- Visitors that do not pass the screening process or do not follow hospital protocols will not be allowed to visit. In this case, a different visitor may be selected.



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### Visitation/Support Person Requirements

Please read through thoroughly. There are many changes and we want to make sure you have a full understanding of each one.

### Visitation Guidelines in the Inpatient Setting:

*Keep in mind, the visitation and support person policy is a standard throughout Bassett Healthcare Network. If exceptions are needed, it will be left up to the Nurse Manager or Nursing Leadership team on that floor. They will evaluate the patient case by case and make their best clinical judgement.*

Visitors in the inpatient setting are allowed in a limited capacity, under the following conditions:

- **Visitation hours will occur daily from 8:00 AM – 8:00 PM.**
- Visitors must enter through the building entrance designated as a screening checkpoint.
  - Only two people will be allowed in the patient room at a time. Keep in mind, this is to include those rooms that have Support Person(s), too. Only two will be permitted in the room at a time during visitation hours.
- Visitors should be 12 years of age or older. Any minor (12-17 years of age) must be accompanied by an adult (18 years of age and older)
- Once in the facility, visitors must remain in the patient's room throughout the visit, except when otherwise directed by hospital staff (i.e. during aerosol-generating procedures or other procedures during which visitors are usually asked to leave.)
- All visitors must adhere to applicable PPE protocol. If masking requirements are in place, you must have your mask on the entirety of the visit, to include being in the patients room. Failure to comply with hospital policy will result in visitation restrictions.

### Visitation Guidelines for the Emergency Department:

*Keep in mind, the visitation and support person policy is a standard throughout Bassett Healthcare Network. If exceptions are needed, it will be left up to the Nurse Manager or Nursing Leadership team on that floor. They will evaluate the patient case by case and make their best clinical judgement.*

- Patients will be permitted to have two visitors with them during their time in the emergency department
- The individual(s) must undergo all screening procedures (temperature check, symptom questionnaire, etc.)
- If a pediatric patient is brought to the ED, both parents are allowed to be with the patient.  
\*Siblings will not be allowed at this time. (Ex: If siblings do show up with the family, one individual will have to wait out in their vehicle with the sibling).
  - If the pediatric patient is admitted, the parent(s) will be allowed to go with them to the unit and be deemed a Support Person.
- If the adult patient is admitted, the visitor must follow inpatient visitor regulations (see above) and get a new Well Screen sticker with the updated room information.
- Once in the facility, a support person/visitor must remain in the patient's room, except when otherwise directed by hospital staff (i.e. during aerosol-generating procedures or other procedures during which non-care team members are usually asked to leave.)



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- Extenuating circumstances will continue to be considered on a case-by-case basis for children, patients who are cognitively impaired, etc. These situations will be at the discretion of the Nurse Manager or Nursing Leadership
- Visitors can be asked to leave at any time by ED staff

### Visitation Guidelines for Inpatient Psychiatry:

#### Visitation Hours (Bassett Medical Center):

- **Visitation hours:**
  - **Monday through Friday: 5:00PM – 8:00PM**
  - **Weekends: 12:00PM – 6:00PM**
- Visit Duration
  - Monday through Friday: One hour per visit
  - Weekends/holidays: Two hours per visit
- A maximum of three patients may have a visitor at any one time. This is to maintain appropriate social distancing between visitors.
- Visitors will be encouraged to make an appointment time so that each patient's visitors can be accommodated.
- All visitation must occur in the Day Room.
- Due to safety procedures, patients awaiting COVID-19 screening results will have visitors scheduled once their negative test is confirmed.
- **Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19:** Patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 may receive visitors if they are in a single room or are the only patient in a double room.

### Visitor Guidelines for Outpatient Appointments:

*Keep in mind, the visitation and support person policy is a standard throughout Bassett Healthcare Network. If exceptions are needed, it will be left up to the Manager or Leadership team. They will evaluate the patient case by case and make their best clinical judgement.*

- One visitor is allowed with a patient at a primary care or specialty care appointment.
  - If a visitor attends an appointment with additional children or family, please follow these recommendations:
    - Ask them if there is anyone with them that could stay in the vehicle with the additional children or family.
    - Ask them to wait in a more private part of the waiting area.
- The visitor must undergo all screening procedures (temperature check, symptom questionnaire, etc.).
- Once in the facility, the visitor must remain in the patient's examination room, except when otherwise directed by staff (i.e. during aerosol-generating procedures or other procedures during which non-care team members are usually asked to leave.)
- **OB Ultrasounds:** Obstetrics (OB) patients may have a visitor attend an appointment with them as long as the following conditions are followed:
  - The visitor must successfully pass all screenings (temperature/questionnaire) upon entrance to the facility.



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- Visitors may not be children (under the age of 18).
- Patients will be allowed to identify one support person at the time of admission, and a certified doula upon request so long as they have tested negative for COVID-19. If the identified support person or doula tests positive or has signs of COVID-19 the patient should find an alternative healthy support person to remain in the hospital setting with them.
- **Pediatric patients:**
  - Both parents are allowed to be present for the pediatric appointment.
    - Both parents must successfully pass all screenings (temperature/questionnaire) upon entering the facility

### Visitation Guidelines for Long-Term Care:

Visitors in long-term care settings are allowed under the following conditions:

#### Visitation Hours (A.O. Fox Nursing Home in Oneonta):

o Entrance for Regular Visiting hours is available 9:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. daily

(Allowances are made for those unable to visit during those hours. Delays may be expected.)

- All visitors are required to undergo screening procedures at the Nursing Home Entrance
- All visitors must present proof of a recent negative COVID-19 test. Complimentary home antigen test kits are available at the nursing home and hospital entrances
- All visitors must wear personal protective equipment (PPE) in the form of a well-fitted, non-cloth mask. Isolation masks are available for those who only have cloth masks.
- All visitors must sanitize hands before and after each visit.
- Physical distancing is to be observed at all times.
- Visits will take place in resident rooms or other private spaces. During an outbreak additional PPE of gown and gloves (facility provided) is required in the resident room.
- Visitors are not allowed in common areas (dining rooms, lounges, etc.).

\*Vaccination for all visitors is strongly encouraged.

#### Visitation Hours (Valley Health Services in Herkimer):

- Visitation hours occur daily from 9 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Monday through Friday. Alternate times on a case-by case basis
- Entrance Screeners will greet you and ask you a series of COVID questions and take your temperature using out Well Screen Kiosk. They will then guide you in the right direction.
- Visit duration: 20 minutes (with flexibility if the next appointment slot is open).
- Please call **315-866-3330 extension 2297** to schedule a visitation appointment.
- All visitors are required to undergo screening procedures and wear personal protective equipment (PPE) in the form of a procedure mask. Testing is also encouraged.
- Compassionate care visits continue to be available for end-of-life residents and extenuating circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

### Visitation Guidelines for Imminent End-of-Life Situations:

Imminent end-of-life situations are situations defined as a patient who is actively dying and where death is anticipated within less than 24 hours.



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*Note: The State of New York does not consider comfort care measures to be imminent end-of-life.*

- Special circumstances can be worked out for 24/7 visitation. Please work with the Nurse Manager on the floor and keep Nursing Leadership and Incident Command informed of updates.

### Support Person Guidelines in the Inpatient Setting:

*Keep in mind, the visitation and support person policy is a standard throughout Bassett Healthcare Network. If exceptions are needed, it will be left up to the Nurse Manager or Nursing Leadership team on that floor. They will evaluate the patient case by case and make their best clinical judgement.*

A support person is allowed outside of regular visitation time if they qualify for overnight care (e.g. cognitive disability, end-of-life, etc.) and have been approved by the Nurse Manager and Nursing Leadership.

- **The selected Support Person(s) will work out the hours with the Nurse Manager on the floor and Nursing Leadership and Incident Command must be made aware of Support Person being added.**
  - The designated support person(s) must undergo all screening procedures (temperature check, symptom questionnaire, etc.) and must adhere to all applicable hospital PPE requirements.
  - Support persons should be 18 years of age or older, except in rare situations which are to be approved by the Nurse Manager and Nursing Leadership.
  - Once in the facility, a support person(s) **must** remain in the patient's room, except when otherwise directed by hospital staff (i.e. during aerosol-generating procedures or other procedures during which non-care team members are usually asked to leave.)
  - All support persons must adhere to applicable PPE protocol. If masking requirements are in place, **you must have your mask on the entirety of the visit, to include being in the patients room.** Failure to comply with hospital policy will result in visitation restrictions.

### Birthing Center

- 2 support person(s) (identified on admission and not interchangeable) and a certified doula while in labor
- 1 support person can remain 24/7 post-delivery, the second support person may come between the hours of 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM

### Pediatrics

- 2 support person(s) identified upon admission
  - 1 support person may remain at the bedside 24/7
  - The second support person may come between the hours of 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM
    - This applies to adult med/surg, and birthing center patients that are transferred and or admitted to the unit

### Discharges

- When a patient has been deemed ready for discharge, one individual can be present for pickup.

### Waiting Rooms

Anyone waiting to go up to visit a patient will remain in the downstairs lobby waiting room.



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### Companion Guidelines for Same-Day Procedures:

#### *Outpatient Clinics:*

- Patients undergoing same-day procedures may be accompanied by a companion regardless of the time of the procedure and remain with them **through the registration process only**.
- Once the patient has completed registration, the companion will either return to their car or report to the appropriate approved designated clinic waiting area (e.g. GI, Surgical Clinic).
- When the patient is ready for discharge, the companion will be called by the clinic nurse to review instructions and will be directed to pick up the patient at the appropriate clinic entrance.
- If the patient is admitted to the hospital post-procedure, the companion may visit the patient during the established inpatient visiting hours unless they meet approved support person guidelines. Please check with staff to see if the patient meets qualifications for a support person and how to register as a designated support person for an inpatient.

#### *Hospitals:*

- Patients undergoing same-day procedures may be accompanied to the facility by a companion regardless of the time of the procedure. They may remain with them **through the registration process only**.
- Once the patient is taken to Ambulatory Surgery (ASU), Cath Lab, or Radiology, the companion will either return to their car or report to the ASU or appropriate waiting area.
- When the patient is ready for discharge, the companion will be called by the discharge nurse to review instructions and will be directed to pick up the patient at the appropriate building entrance.  
If the patient is admitted post-procedure, the companion may visit the patient during the established visiting hours unless they meet approved support person guidelines. Please check with staff to see if the patient meets qualifications for a support person and how to register as a designated support person for an inpatient

### Protective Measures for Visitors/Support Persons:

Health care providers will discuss the potential risks and benefits of a visitor's presence with both the resident and the visitor, if possible.

#### **Visitors/Support Persons will:**

- Enter through the designated entry point.
- Perform hand hygiene and, if applicable, apply a procedure mask.
- Sign in on the WellScreen Kiosk
- Complete screening procedures, including:
  - Symptom screening for the prior 5 days (e.g., fever, sore throat, runny nose, cough, shortness of breath, muscle aches, or diarrhea).
  - Temperature check prior to entering the clinical area and every twelve hours thereafter for the remainder of their presence at the bedside.
  - If applicable, wear appropriate face coverings and PPE. Visitors/support persons will be asked to leave when not in compliance.