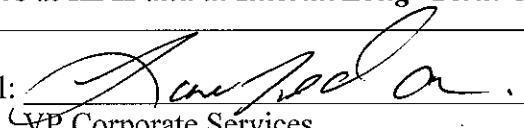


Kemptonville District Hospital Policy	
Category: ADMINISTRATION	Policy Number: VIII-03
Subject: <i>Allowances for General Visitors and Essential Caregivers at KDH and in Interim Long -Term Care</i>	Date Approved: July 2022
Approval:  VP Corporate Services	Revision Dates:

OVERVIEW:

In accordance with our mission of “building healthier communities”, Kemptonville District Hospital (KDH) recognizes the value of essential caregivers. Face-to-face interactions and support in care for loved ones enhances the quality of care, safety, and general wellbeing of our patients/residents. KDH is committed to ensuring this opportunity is afforded to everyone.

Fixing the Long-Term Care Act, 2021 came into effect on April 11, 2022, and replaced the *Long-Term Care Act, 2007*. As outlined in *Fixing the Long-Term Care Act, 2021*, each home must have a written visitor policy in place that respects a resident’s right to have visitors regardless of circumstance. This policy applies across all units at KDH.

DEFINITION OF TERMS:

Essential Caregiver: An individual, identified by a resident/patient or substitute decision maker, whose presence is deemed essential to the resident’s/patient’s physical, emotional, and mental well-being. Each resident/patient is requested to identify up to two (2) such caregivers. In the event the hospital/Interim Long-Term Care (ILTC) Unit experiences an outbreak or is otherwise closed for general visitation; essential caregivers will still be permitted entry.

General Visitor: Anyone other than a patient’s/resident’s two (2) essential caregivers.

When general visitation to the hospital/ILTC Unit is restricted, individuals who fall under this category will have restricted access to the hospital/ILTC Unit.

POLICY STATEMENT:

To support the presence and participation of family and other caregivers according to patient/resident preference, while enabling frontline staff to continue to provide safe quality care.

POLICY:

- 1- On admission, each patient/resident will identify two (2) essential caregivers. Essential caregivers are:
 - Required to be at least 16 years of age.
 - Required to be in compliance with the hospital’s policy **AN-II Mandatory Vaccination for Visitors.**

- Able to visit a patient/resident even in rare instances where general visitation is restricted (i.e., during a hospital/ILTC Unit outbreak).
 - Welcome 24 hours a day, according to patient preference. Small interruptions in essential caregiver presence may occur to protect the privacy rights of patients/residents in shared spaces; additional restrictions may come into effect at times relative to service disruptions or challenges.
- 2- General visitors are welcome during hospital/ILTC Unit visiting hours, which are set from **11:30am-2:00pm and 4:00pm-8:00pm** as outlined on the KDH external website. These hours are subject to change from time to time.
- 3- All general visitors and essential caregivers are expected to adhere to the hospital's infection prevention and control (IPAC) policies. These include, but are not limited to:
- Perform hand hygiene using alcohol-based hand rub before entering and after leaving the patient's/resident's room
 - Communicate with nursing staff prior to entering a the room of a patient/resident who is on isolation precautions.
 - Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)
 - Visit a loved one in the hospital/ILTC Unit only when feeling well and free of any flu-like symptoms (cough, runny nose, headache, diarrhea, etc.).
- 4- In consultation with our IPAC professional, special consideration will be made for essential caregivers and general visitors wishing to enter the hospital/ILTC Unit when the above criteria are not met. Examples include, but are not limited to, when a patient or resident is at the end of life or has significant changes to their plan of care.
- 5- General visitors and essential caregivers are asked to keep noise to a minimum to help our staff foster an environment conducive to rest, sleep, and healing for our patients and residents.
- 6- General visitors and essential caregivers *must* comply with the hospital's policy of zero tolerance for verbal and physical aggression.

PROCEDURE:

IDENTIFYING ESSENTIAL CAREGIVERS:

- 1- On admission to the hospital or Interim Long-Term Care Unit, **each patient/resident will be asked to identify two (2) individuals as essential caregivers.**
- 2- The admitting Registered Nurse or Registered Practical Nurse will note the patient's/resident's two (2) essential caregivers on the patient's/resident's *Admission Assessment and History* (form # 1111 for M&S; form # 1109 for ILTC).

VISITING A PATIENT IN THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT, ON THE MEDICAL/SURGICAL INPATIENT UNITS, OR A RESIDENT ON THE INTERIM LONG-TERM CARE UNIT:

- 1- All essential caregivers/general visitors must follow KDH's policy *AN-11 Mandatory Vaccination for Visitors*. Exceptions may be made for compassionate reasons.
- 2- To promote rest as an essential component to recovery from illness, visiting hours for general visitors are set from **11:30am-2:00pm and 4:00pm-8:00pm**. Visits may take place outside of these timeframes provided that the care needs of all patients/residents can continue to be met. This should be discussed in advance with the care team.
- 3- Hospital staff are encouraged to make allowances for visits that are patient-centered but do not jeopardize the health and safety of other patients/residents/staff.
- 4- All essential caregivers and visitors must comply with IPAC regulations as set out in *Item 3* of the general policy.
- 5- Inpatients on our Medical/Surgical unit are asked to have no more than two (2) visitors at a time. Residents on our interim long-term care unit may have up to four (4) visitors at a time as per the Ministry of Long-Term Care.

VISITING A PATIENT IN THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT, ON THE MEDICAL/SURGICAL INPATIENT UNITS, OR A RESIDENT ON THE INTERIM LONG-TERM CARE UNIT WHEN GENERAL VISITATION IS RESTRICTED:

- 1- If general visitation is restricted (e.g. if a unit is on outbreak), essential caregivers are permitted entry into the hospital/Interim Long-Term Care Unit (unless indicated otherwise by Public Health).
- 2- During periods of general visiting restrictions, one (1) essential caregiver is permitted to visit a patient at a time. Health care providers are encouraged to make special allowance for two (2) parents/guardians to be at the bedside of a patient under the age of 18.
- 3- There is no restriction on the number of times an essential caregiver may enter/exit the hospital/Interim Long-Term Care Unit each day providing IPAC measures identified in *Item 3* of the general policy are adhered to.
- 4- Hospital staff are encouraged to make allowances for additional visitation for compassionate/end-of-life reasons.

ACCOMPANYING AN OUTPATIENT TO AN APPOINTMENT AT KDH:

- 1- When general visiting is not restricted, outpatients may have someone accompany and support them to their appointments.
- 2- When general visiting is restricted, outpatients who do not require the support of an essential caregiver for physical or cognitive care needs are encouraged to attend appointments

independently. Nevertheless, one (1) essential caregiver will be permitted to accompany the outpatient if requested (unless the hospital is directed otherwise by Public Health).

REFERENCE SOURCE(S):

Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021. S.O. 2021, C. 39 Sched. 1 Retrieved from [Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021, S.O. 2021, c. 39, Sched. 1 \(ontario.ca\)](#)

KDH Policy AN-11: Mandatory Vaccination for Visitors (October 2021).

Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, S.O. 2007, c. 8 Retrieved from <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/07108#BK98>

Retirement Homes Policy to Implement Directive #3. Issued December 27, 2021. Retrieved from [retirement_homes_visiting_policy_guidance.pdf \(gov.on.ca\)](#)

RNAO Best Practice Guideline: Person and Family Centered Care (2015). [Person-and Family-Centred Care | Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario \(rnao.ca\)](#)