

 Halton Healthcare	<b>Family Presence Policy</b>		
	Program/Dept:	Quality and Patient Relations	Document Category: Policy
	Developed by:	Patient Experience Advisor	Original Approval Date: October 2015
	Approved by:	Director Quality and Patient Relations, Patient and Family Advisory Council	Reviewed Date: April 2016
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**Purpose:** This policy provides guidelines that support and welcome presence and participation of family members/partners in care in the patient’s care experience during their clinic visit, emergency room visit, and/or hospital and health center visit.

**Scope:** All Halton Healthcare volunteers, staff and physicians.

**Policy:**

1. Halton Healthcare recognizes that family members/partners in care play an important part in the patient’s healing process and as such are essential members of the healthcare team. They can provide support and comfort to enhance safety and quality of care during the patient’s stay. They can also provide essential information during their time in our system and during the transition to home or community care.
2. Family members/partners in care will be identified by the patient.
3. Family members/partners in care are welcome based on the patient’s preferences, wishes, and safety.
4. There are no specified visiting hours. However, in the hospital, quiet time has been designated from the hours of 10pm until 7am every day to promote a restful healing environment for our patients. Access to the buildings through main entrances will vary depending on security resources and site specific needs (*Appendix B – After Hours Access to be developed*). Some areas may have additional guidelines in place, while still maintaining Family Presence principles, for selected patient groups (i.e. Labour and Delivery, Mental Health, etc.).
5. A patient may designate a family member/partner in care to exercise his/her visitation rights on his/ her behalf in the event the patient becomes unable to do so. Upon such designation by a patient, the legal status of the relationship between the patient and the designated partner in care shall be irrelevant. This designation of an individual as the patient’s partner in care, however, does not extend to medical decision making.
6. All Halton Healthcare staff and physicians will work collaboratively with the patient and family member/partner in care to make adjustments or changes in the care plan to support family

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## Family Presence Policy

presence bearing in mind the principles of health, safety, privacy, and confidentiality of all patients.

7. For the safety of our patients, staff, family members, partners in care, guests and visitors are required to perform hand hygiene with soap and water or alcohol based hand rub upon entering and leaving the patient's room.
8. Family members/partners in care, guests and visitors who are feeling unwell, have an infection, and/or have symptoms of respiratory illness or gastro-intestinal illnesses will not come to the Hospital.
9. If an outbreak of infection requires some restrictions from Public Health, the staff will collaborate with the patient and family member/partner in care to enable and ensure that selected family members/partners in care are still able to be present for their loved ones, keeping in mind the safety of the patient and their family.
10. Children (i.e. < 12 years) supervised by an adult, other than the patient, are welcomed. The supervising adult will be responsible for monitoring the children's activities and for applying any personal protective equipment to the child, where indicated.
11. There will be interruptions to family presence to protect the privacy rights of other patients or to maintain safety and security. In the unique event that family members/partners in care presence would need to be limited to ensure safety, confidentiality, and/or effective delivery of treatment/therapy/procedures; Halton Healthcare employees will work with the family members and/or partners in care to continue their presence as soon as possible. Examples where family members/partners in care presence may need to be restricted include:
  - a. A legal reason (e.g., a restraining order, the patient is in legal custody or a court order prohibiting visitors).
  - b. Behavior is disruptive in maintaining a therapeutic environment on the patient care unit.
  - c. A family member or visitor who has a contagious illness or has had a known exposure to a communicable disease that may jeopardize the patient's health.
  - d. An infectious disease outbreak, such as a pandemic, which requires severe access restrictions throughout the community.
  - e. A patient residing in semi-private space that requires immediate lifesaving measures (e.g. resuscitation) or when a sensitive/private discussion needs to occur. In these instances, those present with the other patient may be asked to temporarily step out of the room or area.

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## Family Presence Policy

- f. Delivery of treatment/therapy/procedures where patient has not provided consent for family presence or at the discretion of the clinical staff based on the principle of safety, confidentiality, and/or effective delivery of the items above.
- 12. The number of people welcomed at the bedside at any one time will be determined in collaboration with the patient, family, and/or interprofessional care team. In situations where there are shared rooms, this collaboration may include the other patient and his or her family. To ensure safety and privacy of all patients, considerations will also be given to the physical limitations of the space where space may be a challenge.
- 13. Halton Healthcare staff will work with patients and family members to accommodate overnight stay requests where possible. This will include, but is not limited to, provide patient's family members/partners in care with linen, towels, or use of shower facilities, where available.
- 14. Overnight stay accommodations for multiple bed rooms will also be made in consultation with the other patients staying in the room. All efforts will be made to ensure a restful healing environment is present for all patients.
- 15. Family members/partners in care will collaborate with their assigned clinician (i.e. nurse) to review the terms of their stay and ensure their presence is known to the rest of the staff for emergency evacuations and other departmental operational procedures.
- 16. Patients, family members/partners in care are encouraged to monitor visitors to ensure appropriate sleep and rest is provided to the patient as part of their healing and therapeutic process.
- 17. Family members/partners in care can be directed to the content in Appendix A of this policy available in the Patient Handbook or in our external website.

### **Definitions:**

- A. Family as defined by the Institute for Patient and Family Centered Care refers to "two or more persons who are related in any way – biologically, legally, or emotionally". Patients and families define their "family."
- B. Patient refers to anyone admitted to the Hospital who has an appointment at any one of our sites, or is actively receiving care at any one of our facilities.
- C. Family members/Partners in care are person(s) identified by the patient who are family members and/or friends or other individuals that are present to support the patient during the course of the patient's stay at the health care facility and may exercise the patient's

## Family Presence Policy

visitation rights on patient's behalf if patient is unable to do so. The support person(s) may provide emotional and/or social support and comfort according to the patient's preference. Such individual(s) may or may not be an individual legally responsible for making medical decisions on the patient's behalf.

D. Visitors are those individuals not identified as family members or partners in care.

**Related Documents:** N/A

**Key Words:** visiting, hours, overnight, partners

**Reviewed by/Consultation with:**

Patient Experience Ambassadors – May 7, 2015	Infection Control and Prevention – May 20, 2015
Clinical Resource Nurses – May 29, 2015	Patient Safety Champions – June 16, 2015
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Milton Operations – July 13, 2015	Patient and Family Advisory Council – July 15, 2015
Georgetown - September 17, 2015	Oakville Clinical Managers/Directors meeting – October 6, 2015
Hospitalists – October 15, 2015	Volunteer Services Program - October 2015
Switchboard – October 2015	Security – October 2015
Oakville Operations Steering Committee – October 19, 2015	Operational Readiness Steering Committee – October 27, 2015
Medical Advisory Committee Executive – November 11, 2015	Medical Advisory Committee – Nov 25, 2015 (FYI)

**Signed by:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Archived Copy Only)

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Family Presence Policy

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## Family Presence Policy

### APPENDIX A

#### “FAMILY PRESENCE PRACTICES”

In an effort to provide a safe and healthy environment for patients, families, care partners, visitors, and staff members, Halton Healthcare counts on everyone to understand and abide by some of the following guidelines:

1. **Respect a patient’s right to privacy.** Provincial law requires that hospital comply with strict laws to protect patient’s privacy. Staff can only provide condition updates to designated family members or partners in care.
2. **Be respectful of patient’s assessments, treatment/therapy, and interventions.** The safe and efficient care delivery for all our patients is paramount.
3. **Be respectful and courteous** to all.
4. **Hand washing is very important.** Regular hand washing helps avoid the spread of infection to patients, you, your family, and others. Hand wash dispensers are available throughout the hospital. Please use them before and after every patient contact, before and after you eat and after using the washroom.
5. **Do not visit if you are sick** or have an illness that could be transmitted to our patients. During hospital stays our patients are vulnerable and immune systems may be weak. Please help us to keep them safe.
6. **Observe quiet hospital times**, as well as any restrictions posted on the patient’s doors. You can speak to the patient’s nurse to further understand the precautions or notices posted.
7. **Be aware of the noise level.** Rest and sleep are an important element of the healing process for our patients. Please help us maintain a therapeutic healing environment for all patients.
8. **Coordinate your visits** with other family members and close friends to ensure our patients have a healthy care environment. There are various spaces available throughout the hospital (i.e. waiting areas, cafeteria, etc.) that can be used to avoid overcrowding in the patient care areas.
9. **Patient’s food from home** can be safely stored in the kitchen/pantry/refrigerator (if available in the unit). Once food has been taken to the patient’s room, it cannot be returned to the kitchen/pantry/refrigerator. It should be discarded or brought home.
10. For their safety, **children under 12 must be supervised at all times** by an adult who is not the patient.
11. **Safety** for all our patients is paramount, please refrain from moving furniture around in the rooms that will obstruct doors, exits and access to patients and equipment at all times.