ATMORE COMMUNITY HOSPITAL
POLICY AND PROCEDURE

SUBJECT: Patient Visitation Policy and Procedure **NGEN- SAF-2**	**EFFECTIVE DATE:** 06/15		**REQUIRED SIGNATURES:**
PLACE IN: General Nursing Policy and Procedure Manual	**DATE REVIEWED:** 2/2018, 10/2019, 3/2021	**DATE REVISED:** 5/2023,2/2026	ACH PI Committee
DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY: Nursing			
CROSS REFERENCE: Administrative Policy and Procedure Book			

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Patient Visitation Policy

Purpose

To provide optimum visitor flexibility while promoting a safe, secure, and quiet environment for patients, visitors, and staff. Atmore Community Hospital shall not restrict, limit, or otherwise deny visitation privileges on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, vaccination or immunization status.

Policy

Atmore Community Hospital strives to create a welcoming atmosphere for its patients and visitors while maintaining their safety and security. In order to ensure all patients are provided the best care, Atmore Community Hospital sets certain parameters for visitors. These parameters are designed to promote a climate that facilitates staff interaction with patients and visitors while meeting safety and security requirements. Atmore Community Hospital recognizes that patient safety and the environment of recuperative care are often enhanced by visitation.

Atmore Community Hospital welcomes in-patient visitors between 7 am and 8:30 pm.

Emergency Department visitors are limited to two visitors per patient and may be further limited, temporarily, based on certain situations within the department (ex., high census or critical/trauma patients).

Other specialty areas, such as pre-op and procedural areas, may have further restrictions.

Emergencies, including hurricanes, may require changes to the visitation schedule.

Patients have the right to identify an essential caregiver that may visit for two (2) hours in addition to regular visitation times. Patient clergy is afforded the same visitation rights as an essential caregiver.

Essential caregiver: if a patient is incapacitated and unable to designate an essential caregiver, one of the following shall appoint an essential caregiver on behalf of the patient, in the following order:

1. The patient's guardian
2. The patient's durable power of attorney

If the individual does not have a guardian or a durable power of attorney, a family member shall appoint an essential caregiver on behalf of the patient in the following order:

1. The patient's spouse
2. The patient's child or children, provided the child or children have reached 19 years of age or older
3. The patient's parent or parents
4. The patient's sibling or siblings

In-person visitation will be allowed in all of the following circumstances unless the patient objects:

- End-of-life situations.
- A patient who was living with family before being admitted to the healthcare facility's care is struggling with the change in environment and lack of in-person support.
- The patient is making one or more major medical decisions.
- A patient is experiencing emotional distress or grieving the loss of a friend or family member who recently died.
- A patient needs cueing or encouragement to eat or drink, which was previously provided by a family member or caregiver.
- A patient who used to talk and interact with others is seldom speaking.
- Pediatric patients.

Consensual and appropriate physical contact (ex., hand holding and hugging) is allowed between patient and visitor.

Children under the age of 16 should be accompanied by a responsible adult, other than the patient, at all times. The accompanying adult is responsible for ensuring that the visiting children do not disturb other patients. Problems with the disruptiveness of visiting children may result in requiring the supervising adult to remove the children.

Patients reserve the right to restrict or refuse visitors.

Visitors are required to follow Hospital policies. Visitation privileges of a specific person may be suspended if the visitor violates hospital policies and procedures.
The Hospital may also restrict the visitation of a patient or limit the duration of visits or the number of visitors under certain circumstances. Considerations include but are not limited to the following:

- A legal court order limiting or restraining contact.
- Behavior presenting a risk or threat to the patient, hospital staff, or others in the immediate environment.
- Behavior disruptive to the functioning of the patient care unit.
- When a sterile environment is needed.
- Patient's need for privacy.

Visitors exhibiting any signs or symptoms of infection/illness are encouraged to avoid visiting patients. Signs and symptoms of illness include, but are not limited to, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, cough, runny nose, or sore throat.

Visitors of patients in isolation must follow pertinent Infection Control policies and isolation instructions. Personal protective equipment will be provided for visitors. For the safety of the patient and employees, visitors who fail to comply with infection control/isolation protocols may have visitation privileges suspended.

The nursing supervisor is responsible for ensuring compliance with Atmore Community Hospital's visitation policy. Questions and concerns may be directed to the supervisor.