



**ARROWHEAD REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER**  
**Emergency Response Policies and Procedures**

**POLICY NO. 5040.02 Issue 14**  
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**SUBJECT: VISITOR LIMITATIONS POLICY**

**APPROVED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

Administration

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**POLICY STATEMENT**

Due to the community spread of coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19), considerations must be made for the safety of health facility staff and patients resulting in many health care facilities suspending visitation, except when medically necessary or essential to the care of the patient. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and Arrowhead Regional Medical Center (ARMC) recognize the importance that visitors play in the mental well-being of patients, including pediatric patients, patients in labor and delivery, and patients in critical condition where death may be imminent. ARMC considers visitors an essential part of patient care and recovery.

For purposes of this policy, visitors are those individuals who are considered a guest of the patient. The term "visitor" and "support person" are used interchangeably. It is not applicable to First Responders which include but are not limited to fire, police, and other pre-hospital care workers and county child welfare emergency response ("ER") social workers; Law Enforcement from any agency; San Bernardino County Personnel conducting Official County Business; anyone who is visiting a patient in a representative capacity; or a support person who accompanies a patient to an outpatient and/or emergency department visit.

Additionally, in the situations listed below, there is *limited exemption* from the vaccination or testing requirement for 72 hours for the following:

- Parent or guardian visitors of pediatric patients
- A support person for a labor and delivery patient
- Support persons for a patient with physical, intellectual, developmental disability, or cognitive impairments
- A person visiting for bonding visits including in-room stay with a newborn and hospitalized parent.

Arrowhead Regional Medical Center has adopted CDPH's recommended visitor guidelines to ensure support for a patient's mental health and well-being, while striving to limit the spread of the virus. Of note, rare exceptions may be made in certain specific instances as determined by Hospital Administration. Support persons may be allowed to visit as further referenced in this policy.

Unemancipated minors who visit and/or are support persons must be accompanied by an adult and adhere to the policy requirements herein. For information about visiting hours, please refer to the Administrative Policies and Procedures: Visitation Policy 690.01 Issue 5.

Pursuant to the California Department of Public Health State Order: Requirements for Visitors in Acute Health Care and Long-Term Care Settings, August 26, 2021 and supporting All Facilities Letters regarding Visitor Limitations, ARMC will adhere to the following requirements for visitation effective August 26, 2021 and California Department of Health All Facilities Letter ("AFL") 21-31 Visitor Limitation Guidance at General Acute Care Hospitals effective August 12, 2021:

## PROCEDURE

### I. Visitor Verification of COVID-19 Vaccination and/or COVID-19 Negative Test (within 72 hours)

A. ARMC must (1) verify visitors are fully vaccinated, or (2) for unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated visitors, verify documentation of a negative SARS-CoV-2 test.

B. Pursuant to the CDPH Guidance for Vaccine Records Guidelines & Standards, only the following modes may be used as proof of vaccination:

1. COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card (issued by the Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control & Prevention or WHO Yellow Card) which includes name of person vaccinated, type of vaccine provided, and date last dose administered); OR
2. a photo of a Vaccination Record Card as a separate document; OR
3. a photo of the client's Vaccination Record Card stored on a phone or electronic device, OR
4. documentation of COVID-19 vaccination from a health care provider; OR
5. digital record that includes a QR code that when scanned by a SMART Health Card reader displays to the reader client name, date of birth, vaccine dates and vaccine type.

In the absence of knowledge to the contrary, a facility may accept the documentation presented as valid.

C. Unvaccinated or partially vaccinated visitors are eligible for indoor visits only if they can show documentation of a negative SARS-CoV-2 test where the specimen collection occurred within 72 hours before each visit and for which the test results are available at the time of entry to the facility. Unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated visitors with history of COVID-19 within the prior 90 days may provide documentation of recovery from COVID-19 and release from isolation in lieu of testing. Visitors may choose antigen or molecular (e.g., PCR) testing to satisfy the testing requirement. Any molecular or antigen test used must either have Emergency Use Authorization by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration or be operating per the Laboratory Developed Test requirements by the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

D. Facilities must have a plan in place for tracking verified visitor vaccination status or documentation of a negative SARS-CoV-2 test. Records of vaccination verification or documentation of a negative SARS-CoV-2 test must be made available, upon request, to the local health jurisdiction for purposes of case investigation and must be retained for one year following the public health emergency.

E. Facilities can offer to conduct onsite testing of visitors if practical per facility testing capacity but are not required to do so.

F. Visitors who are visiting a patient in critical condition, when death may be imminent, are exempt from the vaccination and testing requirements of this Order. For such persons the remaining provisions of this policy will still apply.

G. These conditions do not apply to visitors seeking only outdoor visits that will not require entering the facility.

## II. Visitation

### A. Pediatric Patients

1. Visitors are essential for the mental health of pediatric patients. Arrowhead Regional Medical Center recommends that Pediatric patients be allowed two (2) support persons at a time.
2. If a pediatric patient in critical condition, when death may be imminent, two support persons may be allowed at a time.

**B. Labor and Delivery Patients**

The presence of a partner or support person is essential to the mental health of patients who are in labor and delivery. Arrowhead Regional Medical Center recommends that two support persons may be allowed at a time. Additionally, CDPH also recommends that a doula, if used, be permitted to be present. The doula must comply with hospital policies that include but are not limited to protective personal equipment (“PPE”) and infection control guidelines.

**C. Patients in Critical Condition, When Death May Be Imminent**

1. Visitors are essential to the mental health of patients who are in critical condition, when death may be imminent. For their continued mental health, and well-being, ARMC recommends that two visitors may be present at a time. A minor who visits under this exception must be accompanied by an adult.

**D. Behavioral Health Unit Patients (in congregate settings only)**

1. In-person visitation is suspended.
2. Visitation is limited to telephonic visits.

**E. Patients with Physical, Intellectual, and/or Developmental Disabilities and Cognitive Impairments**

1. The presence of a support person is essential to patients with physical, intellectual, and/or developmental disabilities and patients with cognitive impairments. Arrowhead Regional Medical Center recommends that two (2) support persons may be present at a time. For hospitalized patients, especially with prolonged hospitalization (6 days or more), the patient or family/patient representative may designate two (2) people who may be present at a time.

**F. Surgery Patients (Inpatient and Outpatient)**

1. The presence of a visitor is essential to the well-being of surgery patients (both inpatient and outpatient). Arrowhead Regional Medical Center recommends that up to two visitors be permitted until the patient is taken into pre-op (provided social distancing can be accomplished), and up to two visitors when the patient is in recovery and preparing for discharge.

**G. Outpatients and those receiving Diagnostic Testing**

1. Patients are allowed two (2) support persons
2. Pediatric patients are allowed two (2) support persons
3. Patients with an appointment for a Non-Stress Test (NST) clinic are not allowed visitors due to physical space constraints.

**H. Emergency Department Patients**

1. No visitors will be allowed for COVID-19 Positive or Persons Under Investigation (PUI).
2. Low risk patients, in need of a support person, may have one visitor under the discretion of the provider, only after the patient is settled into an assigned room/location. The visitor must stay with the patient in the assigned room/location.

**I. Discharge Planning**

1. Outside facilities may need to send a provider to conduct an on-site assessment of a patient to assist with a transfer to another level of care outside of ARMC. This will be allowed provided:
  - a. The visitor is screened upon entry and is negative for COVID symptoms, and
  - b. The visitor complies with ARMC's policy to wear a mask and any other personal protective equipment as provided in Section III below.

**J. Students Obtaining Clinical Experience and Volunteers**

The California Department of Public Health supports efforts to help ensure that students and other professionals coming into the healthcare workforce are able to obtain necessary clinical experience. With this, students are encouraged to obtain their clinical experience be permitted to come into the facility if they meet the CDC guidelines for healthcare workers to maintain the workforce needed during this pandemic. Additionally, hospitals may allow volunteers in the facility in compliance with their internal policies.

**III. COVID-19 Positive Patients and PUIs**

A. Visitation of COVID-19 positive patients and PUIs will only be allowed in the manner provided below:

1. Patients in critical condition when death may be imminent - Consistent with the limitations already provided above, the visitor will only be allowed provided:
  - a. The visitor is screened upon entry and is negative for COVID-19 symptoms,
  - b. The visitor complies with ARMC's policy to wear a mask and any other personal protective equipment as provided in Section IV below.
2. Pediatric Patients, Dependent Adults and/or Maternal Child Health Patients – may be allowed visitation consistent with Sections I and II(A) above but with additional limitations as follows:
  - a. The visitor is screened upon entry who may screen with a positive answer to the screening question(s), but must be asymptomatic for COVID-19,
  - b. The visitor complies with ARMC's policy to wear a mask and any other personal protective equipment as provided in Section III below,
  - c. Up to two (2) support persons are allowed for the entire duration of the visit, and
  - d. The support person(s) is not allowed to leave the patient's room. Once the support person(s) leaves the patient's room, the support person(s) is not allowed to return until the patient no longer requires COVID isolation.

**IV. Support Persons and Enforcement**

- A. Support persons must adhere to COVID-19 vaccination verification and/or verification of a negative COVID-19 test as indicated in Section I.
- B. Support persons must stay in the room unless otherwise recommended by the healthcare team and are not allowed in and out privileges in the hospital.
- C. Support persons may be screened initially and ongoing prior throughout their visit. Support persons must comply with any health facility instructions on personal protective equipment that at minimum include wearing a mask.
- D. Visitors must physically distance from other health care personnel and other patients/residents/visitors that are not a part of their group at all times while in the facility.
- E. Visitors who refuse to comply with ARMC's infection control measures may be asked to leave the premises.
- F. CDPH strongly encourages facilities, including but not limited to skilled nursing facility (SNF), to create ways for residents and patients to have frequent video and phone call visits. If

shared devices are used for video calls, facilities should ensure appropriate infection control measures are in place.

**V. Definitions**

- A. Visitors - A guest of the patient. The visitor may be a family member, friend, and/or support person. Unemancipated minors are also included in this definition. Additionally, the term "visitor" and "support person" are used interchangeably.
- B. Support Person - A support person in policies at ARMC is interpreted to include any person(s) who play a significant role in a patient's socio-emotional life. This person(s) could be a family member, friend, or other individual who supports the patient during the course of the hospital stay. A patient's "support person" does not necessarily have to be the same person as the patient's representative who is legally responsible for making medical decisions on the patient's behalf. Unemancipated minors are also included in this definition. The term "visitor" and "support person" are used interchangeably.
- C. Fully Vaccinated" means individuals who are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19: two weeks or more after they have received the second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna or vaccine authorized by the World Health Organization), or two weeks or more after they have received a single-dose vaccine (Johnson and Johnson [J&J]/Janssen). COVID-19 vaccines that are currently authorized for emergency use:
  - 1. By the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), are listed at the FDA COVID-19 Vaccines webpage.
  - 2. By the World Health Organization (WHO), are listed at the WHO COVID-19 Vaccine's webpage."
- D. "Incompletely vaccinated" means persons who have received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine but do not meet the definition of fully vaccinated.
- E. "Unvaccinated" means persons who have not received any doses of COVID-19 vaccine or whose status is unknown.
- F. "WHO Yellow Card" refers to the original World Health Organization International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis issued to the individual following administration of the COVID-19 vaccine in a foreign country.
- G. "Patients in critical condition when death may be imminent" is a determination made by the patient's attending physician. It also includes (with limited exemption) a parent or guardian of visitors of pediatric patients, a support person for a labor and delivery patient and/or support persons for a patient with physical, intellectual, developmental disability, or cognitive impairments.

**VI. REFERENCES:**

- A. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Condition of participation: Patient's rights §482.13.
- B. California Department of Public Health All Facilities Letters.
- C. California Department of Public Health State Order: Requirements for Visitors in Acute Health Care and Long-Term Care Settings, August 5, 2021.
- D. Arrowhead Regional Medical Center Administrative Policies and Procedures: Visitation Policy 690.01 Issue 5.

- E. California Department of Public Health State Order: Requirements for Visitors in Acute Health Care and Long-Term Care Settings, August 5, 2021.
- F. California Department of Health All Facilities Letter (“AFL”) 21-31 Visitor Limitations Guidance at General Acute Care Hospitals effective August 12, 2021.
- G. California Department of Public Health State Order: Requirements for Visitors in Acute Health Care and Long-Term Care Settings, August 26, 2021.
- H. California Department of Public Health: Public Health Order Questions & Answers: Requirements for Visitors in Acute Health Care and Long-Term Care Settings, August 30, 2021.

APPROVAL DATE:

<u>N/A</u>	<u>Policy, Procedure and Standards Committee</u>
<u>9/8/21</u>	<u>Patient Safety and Quality Committee</u> <small>Applicable Administrator, Hospital or Medical Committee</small>

REPLACES: EMR 5040.02, Issue 13, Visitor Limitations Policy

EFFECTIVE: 04/16/20

REVISED: 05/22/20, 06/19/20, 7/6/20, 7/28/20/ 8/25/2020, 11/6/2020, 1/25/21, 3/3/21, 6/23/21, 8/10/21, 8/13/21

REVIEWED: 5/2/20, 5/21/20, 6/24/20, 7/28/20, 8/28/20, 11/6/20, 1/25/21, 3/3/21, 3/24/21, 6/24/21, 8/10/21, 8/13/21, 9/8/21