GBMC
CLINICAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

VISITOR POLICY

APPROVAL:

Signature on file
Sr. VP of Patient Care Services & CNO

I. PURPOSE
To foster a therapeutic environment that promotes a prompt recovery while considering the individual and cultural needs of the patient and family and promoting a safe environment for the patient.

II. POLICY
GBMC promotes and supports a patient-centered and family-centered approach to care and recognizes the importance of involvement of family and significant others in the patient care processes while also maintaining a safe and secure environment. This policy will consider the best interest of the patient, the patient care processes, patient rights, and the safety of the patient. To assist in the application of this policy, specific procedures and guidelines have been established. Each patient will be treated individually and exceptions will be based on the patient’s clinical needs as well as the professional judgment of GBMC staff.

III. SCOPE
This policy applies to the Hospital, its physicians and clinical staff members, and all other medical and ancillary departmental personnel involved in the decision-making process with respect to patient visitation. It is applicable to all in-patients and out-patients.

IV. PROCEDURE
The hospital uses a broad definition of “family” as defined by each patient. This concept is recognized by the American Academy of Family Physicians, which
defines “family” as “a group of individuals with a continuing legal, genetic and/or emotional relationship” (American Academy of Family Physicians, 2009).

Patients, their families, and other partners in care are respected as essential members of the healthcare team, helping to ensure quality and safety. Patients define their “family” and how they will be involved in care, care planning, and decision-making. Family members, as identified by the patient, provide support, comfort, and important information during ambulatory care experiences, hospital in-patient stays in critical care, medical/surgical, and specialty units, in an emergency room visit, and in the transition to home and community care.

To continue to ensure safety in the GBMC healthcare environment, families, visitors, and all patient care-partners will be required to follow the organization’s visitor identification policy prior to visiting with the patient. This location of the visitor identification policy is identified below.

   Prior to care being provided, the Hospital shall inform each patient, or their legally appointed guardian, and designated representative; at the time he or she is informed of his or her other rights in writing of the following.
   a. Patient visitation rights and general visiting hours. In addition, regardless of general visiting hours, information will be provided addressing that up to one support person, as designated by the patient, or the legally appointed guardian, will be permitted to stay 24/7 with the patient or within a hospital location near the patient throughout the in-patient/out-patient stay.
   b. Patient right to receive the visitors whom he or she designates, including, but not limited to, a spouse, a domestic partner (including a same sex domestic partner), another family member, or a friend.
   c. Patient right to withdraw or deny such consent at any time.
   d. Justified Clinical Restrictions which may be imposed on a patient’s visitation rights. (Note: The Hospital shall not restrict, limit or otherwise deny visitation privileges on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability.) These clinical restrictions may include, but not be limited to, the following.
      1) Failure of visitor to follow organization infection control guidelines.
      2) Disruptive behavior by visitor.
      3) Unsafe practices exhibited by visitor (ie: smoking in patient room/cubicle).
      4) Evidence of visitor communicable disease.
      5) Organization need to take extraordinary protections because of a pandemic or infectious disease outbreak.
      6) Need for privacy or rest by another individual in the patient’s shared room.
7) When patient is undergoing a clinical intervention or procedure and the treating health care professional believes it is in the patient’s best interest to limit visitation during the clinical intervention or procedure.

8) A court order limiting or restraining contact with the patient.

2. **Selection of Support Person/Visitors.**
   The Hospital shall accept verbal or written confirmation from a patient, or their legally appointed guardian, of the support person identified who will stay 24/7 with the patient or within a hospital location near the patient.
   a. The Hospital shall accept verbal or written confirmation from a patient, or their legally appointed guardian, of individuals who shall be admitted as visitors of the patient and individuals who shall be denied visitation rights.
   b. The Hospital will determine the process used to record such information in the patient’s records for future reference.
   c. In the event the patient is a minor, the legal parent of the minor shall be given the opportunity to verbally designate the individuals permitted to visit the minor patient.

3. **Grievance.**
   a. If any patient of the Hospital, or their legally appointed guardian, believes that patient visitation rights have been violated, they may file a complaint using the Hospital’s internal grievance system. Grievances may also be filed with The Joint Commission (TJC), Department of Health (DOH) within the State, and/or the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).
   b. Hospital grievance contact information and accreditation and regulatory grievance contact information will be provided to the patient, or their legally appointed guardian, at the time the patient, or legally appointed guardian, is provided the information related to the patient visitation policy.

**Attachments**
- Appendix 1: Operating Room Visitor Guidelines
- Appendix 2: NICU Visitor Guidelines
- Appendix 3: L&D Visitor Guidelines
- Appendix 4: Unit 25/26 Visitor Guidelines
- Appendix 5: Unit 27 Visitor Guidelines
- Appendix 6: General Hospital, ED, PEDs, NBN, ICU Visitor Guidelines

**REFERENCES:**


