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CORPORATE			
EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT VISITOR POLICY			
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The WPSHC recognizes the importance of family support in achieving optimum patient outcomes. This policy is intended to balance the needs of the patient and their loved ones as well as the need to have a safe and secure environment for patients, visitors and health care providers.

2.0 PURPOSE

This policy has been developed to support our patient and family centred care philosophy. The WPSHC recognizes the importance of family in the treatment and well being of our patients, especially when in crisis and visiting the Emergency Department.

3.0 PROTOCOL

3.1 Consideration will be made for exceptional circumstances such as:

- a) paediatric patients (under the age of 18)
- b) cognitively impaired patients or those with physical disabilities
- c) palliative care and/or are terminally ill patients
- d) patients who present with significant medical conditions (e.g. spontaneous abortion, major trauma, etc.)
- e) patients who require language interpretation services
- f) patients who require a visitor for compassionate reasons (e.g. pastoral visit, etc.)

Nursing staff will work with physicians and patients to meet each patient and family's needs on an individual basis.

3.2 Visitors are defined as immediate family only and would be limited to one visitor per patient. In the case of no immediate family, or at the request of and in

consultation with the patient, consideration will be made for individuals other than immediate family.

- 3.3 The Emergency Department is not a suitable environment for children 12 years old or younger and therefore will not be permitted to visit except under extraordinary circumstances
- 3.4 If a visitor leaves the bedside to go to the waiting room, outside the building, etc., he or she must check at the Emergency Triage/Reception area prior to returning to the bedside.
- 3.5 Switching of visitors will be permitted in consultation with the health care team in consideration of infection control and departmental circumstances.
- 3.6 Visitors will be asked to leave the bedside for a brief period of time for the purpose of clinical assessments, procedures or treatments at the discretion of the physician and/or staff.
- 3.7 No visitor will be permitted to accompany a patient out of the department for testing (e.g. to xray, CT, MRI) with the exception of pediatric patients unless it is deemed beneficial by the health care team due to exceptional circumstances as outlined in 3.1.
- 3.8 Visitors will be asked to leave the department when the presence of such visitation infringes upon the appropriate management of the department, the orderly functioning of the department or the rights of another patient. Persons exhibiting inappropriate behaviour (including threatening staff) will be escorted out of the department.
- 3.9 In order to maintain the privacy and dignity of all patients in the Emergency Department, visitors and patients must remain inside the treatment rooms. Failure to do so will result in the visitor being asked to leave the department and wait in the waiting room. If the patient is a child, they are not permitted to run about the ED and are to stay in their assigned treatment area.
- 3.10 For admitted patients in the ED awaiting an inpatient bed, regular inpatient visiting hours (2pm to 8pm) and number of visitors (maximum of two per patient) are to apply, taking into consideration the above listed items.

4.0 OUTCOMES

It is expected that all staff, patients and visitors will be treated with respect at all times.

All patients and visitors will be treated in a consistent and fair manner in the Emergency Department.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITY AND MONITORING

The Emergency Department Staff & Physicians
Nursing Leadership Team

6.0 REFERENCES

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Sudbury Regional Hospital (2009). *Visitor policy*. Retrieved from <http://www.hrsrh.on.ca/portalEn/tabid/818/Default.aspx>.

University of Michigan Health System Department of Emergency Medicine (n.d.). *Visitors policy*. Retrieved from <http://www.med.umich.edu/em/patientinfo/visitors.htm>

University of North Carolina Health Care System Department of Emergency Medicine. (2006). *Visitation policy*. Retrieved from http://www.mssm.edu/static_files/MSSM/Files/Departments/Emergency%20Medicine/Manual/SUB19_7.pdf

7.0 RELATED POLICIES

Role of Clergy/Faith Community Leaders
WPSHC Visitors Policy

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