



July 17, 2020

Dear Families and Visitors,

Our primary goal at Highland Hospital is to provide the very best quality of care in an environment that is safe for everyone. Given the public health risks of COVID-19, we followed guidance from the New York State Department of Health and took the difficult and unprecedented action to suspend virtually all hospital visits in March.

Fortunately, with COVID-19 cases declining across the state, the New York State Department of Health has issued new guidance allowing hospitals to resume limited visitation. We understand and value the many benefits that being with loved ones brings to patients and are pleased to be able to reinstate limited visitation. In accordance with Department of Health guidelines, we are implementing stringent safety precautions to keep the risk of infections low as more people enter the hospital. Please review these new visitation guidelines and exceptions as well as important safety guidelines for those entering the hospital.

#### **Hospital Visitation Guidelines:**

- **Visitation for Patients Admitted to the Hospital:** Each hospitalized patient will be able to designate two individuals 18 years of age or older as visitors; one visitor may visit per day for up to **four consecutive hours** between 12 and 8 p.m. Individuals over 70 years of age are discouraged from visiting.
  - No COVID-19-positive or quarantined patients may have visitors unless they are deemed an exception at the discretion of the provider.
- **Visitation for Surgical Patients:** For patients having surgery, one individual will be allowed to accompany the patient during the pre-surgical process and then must leave the premises once the patient goes into surgery. This individual may return at discharge. If the patient is admitted to the hospital after surgery, then the visitation policy above will be followed.
- **Visitation for ED Patients:** The current **No Visitors** policy in the Emergency Department will stay in effect due to safety precautions. ED space is too small to allow for necessary social distancing if large numbers of visitors are present. Exceptions to this policy in ED include patients for whom a support person is deemed essential to care due to intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, cognitive impairments including dementia, and any patients facing imminent end of life.

#### **Important Safety Guidelines for designated individuals entering hospital:**

- **Screening Process** - Upon arrival to the hospital, all visitors and support persons will be screened and have their temperature taken in the hospital's Main Lobby (12 to 8 p.m.) or North Entrance (6 a.m. to 4 p.m.). They will be asked to present identification and give their name and the patient they are visiting. If at any point an individual is identified to have symptoms, they will be asked to leave the hospital.
- **Masking** – All visitors and support persons are to be masked throughout the hospital and asked to remain masked in the room while in the presence of any health care worker.



- o **Remain with Your Loved One** – To minimize exposure for everyone, visitors and support persons **MUST** stay with their patient continually and are not to leave the patient’s room without the patient at any time, except to use a rest room. For patient and caregiver safety, we ask that visitors do not use the patient’s bathroom while visiting. Please note - visitors should not leave the building to smoke. Those who smoke are encouraged to bring nicotine replacement with them.
- o **Leaving the Hospital** – When visitors leave to go home, we expect that he or she will continue to consistently observe masking, social distancing and handwashing hygiene to protect your loved one, our staff, and the community at large.

Please be assured we will continue providing your loved one with compassionate, patient-centered care at all times, and recommend utilizing technology to keep patients in touch with family and friends who cannot visit. We will gladly work with you should you not have access to such devices. Our visitation guidelines will be revisited routinely, and may change based on the current risk surrounding the spread of COVID-19. Regular visiting practices will be reinstated as soon as it is deemed safe to do so.

If you have any questions about the visitation restrictions, please go to [urmc.rochester.edu/highland](http://urmc.rochester.edu/highland) for the latest information about our visitation policy. To speak with a Patient Relations representative, please call 585-341-9673 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

We greatly appreciate your understanding and cooperation during this difficult time.

*Cindy Becker*  
Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

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Highland Hospital Associate Medical Director