

June 25, 2020

Dear Families and Visitors,

Our primary goal at UR Medicine/St. James Hospital is to provide the very best quality of care in an environment that is safe for everyone. Given the extreme public health risks surrounding COVID-19, in accordance with the New York State Department of Health, in March we had to take the difficult and unprecedented action to eliminate all hospital visitors, to halt potential spread of this new virus.

Fortunately with COVID cases declining across the state, the New York State Health Department, has issued new guidance to restore limited visitation. We understand and value the many benefits being with loved ones brings to patients and are pleased to be able to reinstate limited visitation. In accordance with NYS 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.

### **St. James Hospital Visitation Guidelines:**

- **Visitation for Patients Admitted to the Hospital (Inpatients):** Each hospitalized patient will be able to designate 2 individuals 18 years of age or older who will be allowed to visit. Only one person will be permitted to visit per day, for up to **4 consecutive hours** anytime from 10am to 4pm. Individuals over 70 years of age are discouraged.

#### **Exceptions:**

- *Pediatric Patients – 2 guardians can be designated, however, only one parent may be present at a time with no time limitations. Parents are permitted to switch as needed throughout the hospitalization.*
  - *Patients for whom a support person is deemed essential to care – for patients with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, and patients with cognitive impairments including dementia, 1 support person may be identified and present with no time limitations.*
  - *End-of-Life Patients – Patients in imminent end-of-life may have 2 individuals visit the patient together.*
  - *Patients Hospitalized with COVID – No COVID-19-positive patients may have visitors unless they meet one of the other outlined exceptions.*
- **Visitation for Surgical Patients:** One visitor is allowed for pre-op check-in and at discharge. Exceptions to this policy 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.
  - **Visitation for ED Patients:** The current **‘No visitors’** policy in the Emergency Department will stay in effect due to safety precautions. ED space does not allow for necessary social distancing if 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.

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

- o **Screening Process** - Upon arrival to the hospital, all visitors and support persons will be screened in the lobby and then have their temperature taken upon arrival to the inpatient unit. If at any point an individual is identified to have symptoms, they will be asked to leave the hospital unless their loved one's death is imminent.
- o **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. Please note - this includes leaving to smoke. Visitors who smoke are encouraged to bring nicotine replacement with them.
- o **Leaving the Hospital** – When visitors and support persons 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 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 at any time 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 [visitors.urmc.edu](http://visitors.urmc.edu) for the latest information about our visitation policy. To speak with a Patient Relations representative, please call 607-247-2365, or call the main switchboard at (607) 247-2200.

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

*Bilal Ahmed, M.D.*  
Chief Medical Officer

*Bryan O'Donovan*  
President & CEO

*Richard Whitney*  
Interim Chief Nursing Officer