

VISITORS TO PATIENTS

1. PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY. This policy provides the rules, regulations and procedures regarding visitors to patients and residents. This policy applies to patients, employees, consultants and visitors on the Mississippi State Hospital (MSH) campus, including Whitfield Medical Surgical Hospital (WMSH), Inpatient Services, and Oak Circle Center. For visitors to residents, refer to JNH POL 500-28. For visitors to patients receiving treatment for substance use, refer to MSH POL 300-51.

2. POLICY.

A. Visiting hours are as follows:

(1) Male Receiving Service

- a. Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1pm -3pm
- b. Saturdays and State Holidays from 9am-11 am and 1pm-3pm

(2) Female Receiving Service

- a. Wednesdays and Fridays from 1pm-3pm
- b. Saturdays and State Holidays from 9am-11 am and 1pm-3pm

(3) Oak Circle Center

- a. Monday through Friday from 1pm-3pm
- b. Saturdays and State Holidays from 9am-11 am and 1pm-3pm

(4) Continued Treatment Service

- a. Monday through Friday from 1pm-3pm
- b. Saturdays, Sundays, and State Holidays from 1pm-3pm

SUPERSEDES: April 2021.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES: Re-worded certain parts for clarity. Added examples of contraband. Revised information related to visitors of forensic service patients.

ER: Hospital Director.

DR: Chief of Medical Staff.

(5) WMSH Medical Surgical Unit

- a. 1-3 p.m. and 5-7 p.m. Monday-Friday
- b. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. and 5-7 p.m. Saturday, Sunday and holidays
- c. Visitation for seriously ill patients may be individualized by the attending physician or nurse in charge.

(6) Forensic Services

a. General

(1) Due to security considerations, the treatment team may determine duration and frequency of visits on a case-by-case basis for patients in the Forensic Services.

(2) Visitors under the age of 18 will need attending physician approval.

(3) Visitors will only be allowed to bring car keys and change into the building to purchase one snack and one drink for the patient from the vending machine.

(4) No more than 2 visitors at a time per patient

b. Building 87

(1) Monday through Friday from 1pm-4pm

(2) Saturdays, Sundays, and State Holidays from 9am-11 am and 1pm-4pm

c. Buildings 43 and 90

(1) Wednesday and Thursday with times determined by the physician

(2) Visits scheduled in advance through the front office/social worker

(3) Visits are one hour.

(4) One weekend per month will be designated for general visitation that does not require prior scheduling.

B. Patients admitted to IPS Male Receiving, Female Receiving and Medical

Psychiatric Units will not be authorized to receive visitors for a period of 24 hours following admission. Exceptions to this period may be made with a physician's order justifying the change.

C. Patients have the right to limit or to refuse access to any visitor.

D. Due to security considerations, the treatment team may determine the duration and frequency of visits on a case-by-case basis for patients on the Forensic Services.

E. Based upon evaluation of the patient's clinical condition and behavior, a physician may write an order either to allow or to restrict visitors at any time which may be an exception to standard policy. The safety of the visitor and best therapeutic interest of the patient will be taken into account. Patients in seclusion and/or restraint may not receive visitors.

F. Visitors who have an observable and documented adverse effect upon a patient's clinical condition may be subject to visitation restrictions.

(1) The attending physician will document in the healthcare record progress notes the visitor's name that is restricted, the clinical reasons for the restriction and the type of restriction, e.g. time limit, location of visit or if the visit is prohibited.

(2) The attending physician or his/her designee will explain the restriction to the visitor and document this in the healthcare record.

(3) The attending physician will review and document visitation restriction every seven days and/or at the time of treatment plan review, and any time a change in the patient's condition warrants review of visitation restriction of routine visiting hours.

(4) The attending physician will ensure all visitation restrictions, including any changes made to those restrictions, are forwarded to the MSH Police and Hostess Desk by designated building staff once those decisions are made.

G. If the patient to be visited is acutely symptomatic, the visit may be cancelled. Also, the patient may choose not to see a visitor. If the patient is unable or unwilling to see a visitor, the nurse will explain the circumstances to the visitor. If the patient is acutely symptomatic or is on a restricted level or is requiring seclusion/restraints prior to a known/scheduled visitation, the social worker will attempt to contact the visitors prior to the visitation time.

H. If visitors violate policies or engage in inappropriate behavior during the visit, including, but not limited to, yelling, verbal or physical aggression, sexual activity, or other behavior potentially harmful to other people, a staff member shall call the police and end the visitation. This may also result in revocation of a person's visitation privileges.

I. If the Shift Leader, nurse, or police officer has a reasonable belief that security will be jeopardized by the visitor(s), MSH Police will be notified immediately for assistance. The visitor will be refused admission with an explanation to the visitor and patient. The incident will be documented and brought to the attention of the Service Chief.

J. No restriction shall be placed upon a patient's visitation with his/her attorney. A patient has the right to meet with his/her counsel at all reasonable times.

K. Ministers will be allowed reasonable professional access to patients beyond the restriction of routine visiting hours.

L. Visits to patients are allowed unless there is an order from the attending physician prohibiting such visits. For all services, children under the age of 18 visiting the MSH campus must be under adult supervision at all times.

M. Patients may not ride in motor vehicles with visitors.

N. Patients may not drive a motor vehicle during a visit.

O. Patients may only have 2 visitors at a time. If more than 2 people are present to visit, visitation will be done in rotation. Patients and their visitors will be provided as much privacy as possible; however, all visits will be supervised by staff at all times.

P. Visitors will not be allowed to bring into the building the following items, including, but not limited to: backpacks, purses, cell phones, cameras, cigarettes, vaping devices, lighters, medications, or other forms of contraband, etc. Should any of these items be brought into the building inadvertently, staff will direct the visitor(s) to return the items to his/her vehicle immediately. If clothes or other necessities are brought for the patient, the items will be given to a staff member prior to contact with the patient.

Q. Except for CTS and Forensic Service patients, food will not be allowed to be brought on visits. The amount of food brought will be only enough that will be consumed during the visit. Snacks may be purchased through the vending machines and consumed during the visit. Items in glass or metal containers will not be allowed.

R. Exceptions to the above policies may be made through a written order by the physician or nurse practitioner when clinically justified.

S. Relatives who visit patients and wish to photograph them may do so only under supervision by a Public Relations staff member. All employees have the responsibility to inform visitors who violate this policy that photography is restricted in order to protect patient confidentiality.

T. The hospital administrative staff may restrict or cease privileges of any individual who does not comply with the policies and regulations of MSH.

U. If a CTS patient has ground privileges, the patient and visitor may visit on the grounds.

3. PROCEDURE.

A. Upon arrival, the visitor will be stopped at the front gate by an MSH Police Officer who will record the visitor's name, reason for visiting, number of persons in the motor vehicle, license plate number, county and the time of arrival on the MSH Daily Traffic Flow Report (MSH 65). MSH Police will issue a red clip-on visitor pass to visitors.

B. MSH Police will provide the driver with an MSH Visitor Pass to be placed on the dashboard of the motor vehicle. The visitor will be instructed by MSH Police to obtain a Visitor's Permit from the Hostess in the lobby of the Administration Building (B-21).

C. The hostess will advise the visitor of this policy by providing guidelines regarding what items are not allowed to be brought into the buildings. These guidelines will also be provided at admission.

D. The hostess will complete the Visitor's Permit, give it to the visitor and provide the building number and location of the patient. The hostess will maintain a copy of the Visitor's Permit on file for one month.

E. The hostess or operator will call building staff to notify them of a patient visitor, including on the weekends, to notify them of a patient visitor.

F. For all units except for the Forensic Unit, the staff will complete the following:

(1) Greet the visitor, obtain the Visitor's Permit, check for completion, and place in patient's chart.

(2) Ensure that there are no visitor restrictions on the patient's chart.

(3) Require the visitor to sign the Visitor's Book (proof of identification or patient PIN number may be required or requested).

(4) Take possession of items that have been brought for the patient

(5) Direct the visitor to the visiting room

G. For the Forensic Unit, the staff will complete the following:

(1) The front control operator will greet the visitor, notify the Shift Leader of the visitor, and process the visitor through the metal detector.

(2) The Shift Leader will obtain the Visitor's Permit, check for completion, and place it in patient's chart.

(3) The Shift Leader will ensure that there are no visitor restrictions on the patient's chart and then have the visitor to sign the Visitor's Book (proof of identification or patient PIN number may be required).

(4) The Shift Leader will check the visitor's belongings for contraband, inspect as to the contents of packages for patients, and take possession of items that have been brought for the patient. If any items are deemed not appropriate for patients, the staff will secure the items for proper disposition.

(5) The Shift Leader or other staff member will escort the visitor to the designated visiting area. Patients may visit with family and friends in the visiting area for one hour unless otherwise modified by a physician's order. Patients with grounds privileges are not allowed to visit with family and friends anywhere other than on B43. Visits will be supervised at all times.

(6) Visitors traveling long distances may contact the social worker prior to the visit and request an extended visitation time. Reasonable effort will be made to accommodate such requests when given adequate notice.

(7) At no time will a Forensic Patient enter a vehicle other than an authorized MSH or law enforcement vehicle.

H. For all units, any visitor who displays behavior toward a patient or employee which adversely affects the clinical condition of the patient or therapeutic milieu of the unit will be asked to leave the campus.

(1) If the visitor refuses to leave, MSH Police will be contacted to escort the visitor from the campus.

(2) The attending physician will be notified of the incident and document the incident in the patient's healthcare record.

(3) If indicated, the patient's treatment team will make an effort to schedule a conference with the visitor for the purpose of follow-up, education and prevention of future incidents. If the treatment team cannot arrange a conference, the attending physician or designee will contact the visitor to discuss the incident.

(4) The treatment team will discuss the incident and the status of the visitations for the patient, and apply the guidelines for restriction of visitation if necessary.

I. When the visitor exits the front gate, the Visitor's Pass will be turned in at that time. MSH Police will reconcile the number of persons in the car at the time of exit to the number at the time of arrival and record that number on the Daily Traffic Flow Report.