



ESSENTIAL
PARTNERS
IN CARE

FAMILY PRESENCE AT HORIZON

“My husband and I both knew that he was losing his war with Parkinson’s disease, but it will always be a treasured memory for me that I was able to be with him constantly during his last few days. I was there to hear his last words for me. That is a time that can’t be predicted by visiting hours.

- One of Horizon’s Patient Experience Advisors



BACKGROUND

Horizon's Family Presence Policy recognizes that family and friends play a vital role in our patients' physical and emotional well being. Our **Designated Support Persons (DSPs)** are central to this policy and are an essential part of family presence and patient and family centred care in our hospitals and long-term care facilities. We see family, as defined by the patient, as an important part of patients' healing and emotional wellness.



WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DSPS AND SOCIAL VISITORS?

DSPs are different than social visitors because they:

- » are considered essential members of the health care team
- » provide emotional and personal support to the patient such as bathing, feeding, etc.
- » can assist with decision making, and provide key health information
- » are welcomed 24 hours a day according to patient preferences AND in coordination with the patient care team

Social visitors are also important to family presence, but are not:

- » considered essential members of the health care team
- » involved in decision making/providing key health information
- » involved in the provision of personal support to the patient
- » permitted to visit patients outside of a hospital/facility's visiting hours schedule

Please note: Addictions and Mental Health and community-based services such as Detox treatment centres have visitation and family presence practices consistent with their individual clinical practices. Please speak to these services for more information.

GENERAL VISITATION GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY PRESENCE IN HOSPITALS AND LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES

- » DSPs are identified by the patient and may include family members, close friends or other caregivers
- » DSP access to patients is flexible AND determined in collaboration with patients and their health care teams
- » The level of DSP support is defined by patients and discussed in collaboration with their health care teams
- » Social visitors are not defined as an essential partner in patient care planning and/or part of decision making
- » Social visitors are welcome to visit during the facility's designated visiting hours, which is typically every day from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- » Staff may ask DSPs and social visitors to exit patient/treatment rooms during tests or procedures and to return once the test or procedure is finished

VISITATION GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY PRESENCE IN OUTPATIENTS/AMBULATORY CARE/EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS

- » Space permitting, each patient may have up to two DSPs
- » If space does not permit, DSPs will be directed to an area where they may wait for the patient
- » Staff may ask DSPs and social visitors to exit patient/treatment rooms during tests or procedures and to return once the test or procedure is finished

VISITATION QUIET HOURS AND ETIQUETTE

- » Daily inpatient quiet hours are from 9 p.m. to 7 a.m.
- » Some patient care units have afternoon quiet hours to allow patients to rest; however DSPs, in discussion with health care staff, may be permitted to stay with patients at this time
- » DSPs have access to patient units 24 hours a day and, in accordance with a patient's preferences and in discussion with the health care team, they may remain at a patient's bedside, including overnight
- » Patient room washroom and shower facilities are for patient use only. DSPs and social visitors must use the facility's public washrooms
- » DSPs are responsible for their own food and drink. Cupboards and fridges located on patient care units are for patient use only.



VISITATION SAFETY

- » DSPs and social visitors should not visit the hospital if they feel sick. Health care teams will make every effort to update DSPs/substitute decision makers* about a patient's condition and if there is a sudden change in their condition
- » All DSPs and social visitors are required to clean their hands with hand sanitizer before entering and exiting a patient's room and care unit
- » DSPs are asked to please keep patient room floors clear of purses, bags and other personal items
- » The following items are not permitted on patient care units for the safety of patients and staff:
 - Matches
 - Lighters
 - Cigarettes
 - E-cigarettes
 - Electrical appliances
 - Firearms
 - Knives
 - Personal chairs
 - Cots
 - Any other item that poses a safety risk
- » DSPs and social visitors are asked to please respect Horizon's scent-free policy
- » Horizon facilities are latex free. Please do not bring latex balloons or poinsettias into a patient's room. The latex powder and pollen from poinsettias will cause a severe reaction in persons with allergies

***Substitute Decision Maker:** *a particular individual who has authority to give or refuse consent on behalf of the incapable person.*

PRIVACY

- » DSPs and social visitors may be asked to step out of a patient's room if staff need to discuss or administer care or conduct a sensitive test or procedure (with a patient or another patient in the room). This is done to protect patient privacy
- » Please respect the privacy of health care staff, other patients, DSPs and social visitors when taking photographs, video recordings or audio recordings

VISITATION GUIDELINES FOR OVERNIGHT STAYS

- » If DSPs choose to stay after quiet hours (between 9 p.m. and 7 a.m.) they should discuss it with the health care team and obtain the proper identification tag
- » If DSPs choose to stay overnight with a patient, every attempt will be made to provide a chair or item of furniture that is suitable for sleeping
- » If there is not enough space in the patient room for an overnight stay, a member of the health care team will collaborate with DSPs to find other options



VISITATION GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN

- » Children under the age of 12 must be supervised at all times by an adult who is not the patient. Health care staff are not responsible for supervising children under the age of 12.

VISITATION GUIDELINES FOR PERSONAL PETS

- » Personal pet visitation is permitted. A visit from a pet can have many therapeutic benefits for patients, especially during a lengthy hospital stay
- » Arrangements must be made with the health care team before bringing any domestic pets into the hospital
- » Pets entering the hospital must be clean and kept on a short leash or in a pet carrier until they reach a patient's care unit
- » Pet visitation will only occur outside of the patient room, in a lounge area or family room if possible. Pets are not permitted to roam freely on any patient care unit
- » Please be mindful of patients who may have allergies or fears of the pet
- » For more detailed information on Horizon's Personal Pet Visitation Policy, please visit the Horizon website or ask a member of the health care team



Please note: Staff and physicians will make every effort to accommodate the wishes of patients; however, all decisions will be made by the health care team to ensure patient safety and comfort.

YOUR FEEDBACK IS IMPORTANT TO US:

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