To: All Staff  
From: Leadership and Infection Prevention and Control  
Effective: November 15, 2016  
Re: Winter inpatient visiting guidelines

For the protection of all patients, visitors, and staff, Children’s institutes visitor guidelines during respiratory illness season.

Compassionate exceptions will be made by the patient care manager or patient care supervisor on a case-by-case basis as outlined in the visiting exceptions section.

Definitions:
Visitor: Visitors are defined as guests of parent / legal guardian or adult patient. This includes siblings.

Legal Guardian: Person(s) who has legal authority to make decisions for the minor child. If there are questions over who has legal guardianship or when the minor patient has decision-making rights, contact social work.

Guest of Children’s Hospital: Persons who are visiting the hospital, but are not here to see a specific patient. Examples include Foundation guests (corporate donor), child life guests (Santa), community guests (choir).

Respiratory Illness Season: Infection prevention and control will determine the start and end of respiratory illness season. Respiratory illness season typically starts in October, and ends in late April or May. In the event of early or extended viral season, these dates will be adjusted accordingly.

Public Space: Areas in the hospital where non-screened or ill persons may be. Public spaces include hospital lobby, cafeteria, Star Studio in Minneapolis, and centrally located conference rooms, such as the Ed Center, Garden View 1054 or 4057.

Patient Care Areas: Patient care units, patient rooms, including the ED and clinic rooms. Access to these spaces is limited based on purpose of visit and wellness screening (for inpatient areas).

General Visitor Guidelines:
1. All legal guardian(s) and visitors will be screened for wellness upon entry to the hospital. See the visitor screening process section.
2. Visitors who do not pass the wellness screening will not be allowed to visit inpatient areas.
3. Legal guardians with mild respiratory symptoms may visit, and must wear a mask. See legal guardian guidelines section.
4. Well visitors who are not from the same household as a patient with a respiratory illness will be asked to wear a mask for the visitor’s protection, at the time of room entry.
5. No visitors under the age of 5.
   - See neonatal section for exception for siblings of neonatal patients
• See sibling play area section for options for children under age 5.

6. Legal guardians are welcome at all times, and are not considered visitors.

7. Visiting hours for all other visitors are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

8. All visitors will be instructed on hand hygiene at the point of wellness screening. Bedside staff will reinforce the importance of hand hygiene.

9. Only screened and badged visitors should remain on the patient care units, including the parent lounges, elevator lobbies, hallways, and other general areas. Individuals not allowed on the patient care units may go to public spaces such as the lobby or cafeteria.

10. No more than four (4) people are allowed in a patient’s room at one time. This includes legal guardians, siblings, and visitors.

   NOTE: Clergy are not considered visitors, and may be present in a patient’s room above and beyond the limit of 4 people at the bedside, as long as they have passed the wellness screening.

11. Visiting may be further restricted by staff if it is in the child’s best interest (e.g., dysautonomia and overstimulation, part of behavioral plan for child, etc.)

12. Legal guardians or visitors will be required to leave the hospital if they do not follow these guidelines and wear their mask as directed.

13. Social visits from former patients and families should be discouraged. Any visiting with former patients and families should take place in public spaces of the hospital, not in patient care areas.

14. Large groups (more than four people) who are not related to the patient, such as sports teams, church choirs, etc. should not visit.

**Neonatal Visiting Guidelines (NICU, ICC, SCN):**

1. Children who are age 5-11 and are members of the same household as the patient may visit for 15 minutes per week, if they have passed the wellness screening.

2. Children who are age 2-4 and are members of the same household as the patient may visit one time for up to 15 minutes to be introduced to their new sibling, if they have passed the wellness screening.

3. Children who are age 11 and under who are not members of the same household as the patient may not visit.

**Legal Guardian Guidelines:**

1. Legal guardians are subject to the same screening, infection prevention, PPE, and restriction of location requirements as other visitors.

2. Legal guardians with respiratory symptoms who are visiting their child must:
   - Discuss the risks and benefits of visiting while ill with the patient’s primary care team.
   - Wear a mask at all times while in the hospital — both in public spaces and in the patient’s room.
   - Minimize going to public areas such as hallways, parent lounges and cafeteria.
   - Perform hand hygiene on room entry and exit, and before and after contact with the patient.

3. Bedside staff should review infection prevention measures, including hand hygiene, not touching mouth or nose, and cough etiquette with legal guardians with respiratory symptoms.

4. If extenuating circumstances arise limiting the legal guardian’s ability to be at the bedside, a specific individual may be designated to be present for the patient in their place for a defined period of time.
Visitor Screening Process:
1. Welcome Center staff or other designated screening personnel will screen all legal guardians and visitors.
2. The Welcome Center or designated screening personnel will issue a visitor badge, with a color coded sticker:
   - **Green** — Visitor has passed the screening and may proceed to the inpatient unit. No mask required.
   - **Yellow** — Visitor has not passed the screening but may visit the inpatient unit. Mask is required at all times.
     - Yellow dots should be used for legal guardians and other vital visitors who have been granted a visitor exception who have mild respiratory symptoms.
   - **Red** — Visitor did not pass the screening and may not visit the inpatient unit. They may visit public spaces but must wear a mask at all times and be encouraged to leave as soon as possible.
3. It is every staff person’s responsibility to direct people back to the Welcome Center if they do not have a badge with a color-coded sticker.
4. It is every staff person’s responsibility to reinforce the use of masks for visitors with red or yellow dots on their badge.
5. Legal guardians who stay overnight must be re-screened and receive a new badge each day, and should do that by 11 a.m. of the next day.

Ronald McDonald House (RMH)
1. Family members of patients in NICU, ICC, CVCC and PICU may use the Ronald McDonald House (RMH), if they have passed the wellness screening.
2. Family members with respiratory symptoms (or symptoms of any illness) may not visit the Ronald McDonald House.
3. Legal guardians with mild respiratory symptoms may use the Ronald McDonald House, but should wear a mask when outside of their RMH room. Legal guardians with a yellow sticker should eat meals in their RMH room (as opposed to at the community table or in the patient’s room).
4. Children under age 5 who have passed the wellness screening may accompany their legal guardians to the Ronald McDonald House.
5. Volunteers, former families, and those wanting to do business, who have passed the wellness screening, are allowed only to the Ronald McDonald House for their purpose of serving a meal, making a donation, or attending a meeting. **All volunteers and those serving a meal must be at least 14 years old and must pass wellness screening.** If they do not pass the wellness screening, they may not visit the RMH.
6. Individuals with a purple dot only are not permitted in patient care areas.

Sibling Play Area, Minneapolis
1. Children age 2 and up who have passed the wellness screening may use the sibling play areas.
2. Adults who accompany children to the sibling play area must be well, and have a green dot on their visitor’s badge.
Child Life Zone, St. Paul
1. Adults and children visiting the Child Life Zone must pass the wellness screening and have a green dot on their visitor's badge.
2. Siblings may use the Child Life Zone if the patient they are visiting is on Standard Precautions.
3. Food events in the Child Life Zone may be attended by all families. Families who are not under standard precautions (contact, droplet, enteric) may pick up food and bring it back to their rooms. Patients and families under standard precautions may stay for the duration of the Child Life Zone food event.

Guests of Children's Hospital
1. **Guest of Children's Hospital** is defined as a person who is not here to visit a specific patient. Examples include Foundation guests (corporate donor), child life guests (Santa), community guests (choir), etc.
2. **General statement**: The reason for the visit will determine where in the hospital a guest is permitted to go. Most guests may not enter the rooms of patients who are in transmission-based precautions (droplet, contact, enteric, airborne) (see exceptions below).
3. **Child life guests**: Certain child life guests and volunteers may visit patients in precautions if it meets a specific therapeutic purpose. If clinical consultation is needed, page the infection preventionist on call at 651-629-4444.
4. **Foundation events**: Those that remain in public spaces and do not mingle with inpatients are allowed after guests are screened using the corporate volunteer screening process.
5. **Foundation guests**: Individual donors must be screened at the Welcome Center, and accompanied by Foundation staff. It is preferred that they stay in public spaces for tours. Visits to a patient room may be possible, if both the guest and guide are well and the patient is not infectious.
6. **Tour groups**: Small groups are preferred – one staff person to two guests. No more than four guests may tour at a time.
7. **Media groups**: Media crews must be accompanied by a Children's media specialist. The group may be no more than four people total. They must check with the charge nurse before entering a patient room, and follow all posted precautions signs.

Visiting Exceptions
1. **Standing Exceptions**: The following situations do not require consultation with the patient care manager or patient care supervisor:
   - **Day of admission** — it is understood legal guardians/families/visitors may not be aware of the visitor guidelines and may not have childcare options readily available. Therefore, **on the day of admission only**, children less than 5 years old may visit if they pass the wellness screening until other arrangements can be made. Legal guardians should be asked that they make other arrangements as soon as possible.
     
     **NOTE**: Visiting guidelines should not interrupt patient flow. Patients should be transferred from the ED/clinic to the inpatient unit, regardless of the family's ability to make alternate arrangements.
   - **Morning surgery cases** — the 9 a.m. start time for visiting hours may be lifted at the discretion of the charge nurse.
   - **After hours** — visiting exceptions for after-hours visits from visitors other than legal guardians may be made in consultation with the charge nurse.
   - **Imminent death or dire emergency** — nurse and physician judgment should be used to allow family and visitors to be with the child. Exposure of others in unit should be kept in mind.
When any of these standing exceptions are made, they should be communicated to the Welcome Center prior to visitor arrival.

2. **Compassionate Exceptions:** *After the day of admission,* all visiting exceptions (other than those noted above) must go through the patient care manager or patient care supervisor. (Exceptions cannot be made by nurse or physician order alone).
   - If the patient care manager or patient care supervisor is not available, work with the unit charge nurse to contact the unit-designated back up.
   - Common situations in which a compassionate exception might be requested include, but are not limited to:
     - A legal guardian may request a specific individual to visit in lieu of him or herself for a defined period of time. (Examples – single parent who wants to designate a second adult, out of town parent, PCA.)
     - Family situations with children under 5 who have no alternative childcare options.
     - A visiting infant sibling who is exclusively breastfeeding and may need to accompany the mother to support breastfeeding. (NOTE: the biggest risk in this scenario is to the infant sibling. This exception should only be made if absolutely necessary.)
   - Compassionate exceptions must be communicated:
     - To the Welcome Center
     - In the EMR (in the visitation detail orderable of the orders section)
     - To the patient’s nurse (verbally)
   - In situations of disagreement or uncertainty about a compassionate exception, patient care managers or patient care supervisors may consult with the on-call infection preventionist or unit social worker.
   - In situations where legal guardians or visitors are resistant to following visitor guidelines, a team approach should be used, including social work, charge nurse and provider. Other resources such as the on-call infection preventionist or security should be used as needed.

3. **Worsening Epidemic:** In the event that the community experiences an epidemic and/or infection prevention and control becomes aware of any situation in which the health and safety of the patients are at risk, visitors may be further restricted up to and including restricting all visitors other than legal guardians and/or primary caregiver.

**Comments/Questions:**

Please contact Wendy Berg at wendy.berg@childrensmn.org with any comments or questions.