

## MultiCare Ambulatory/Outpatient Patient and Caregiver/Support Person Policy

The safety of our patients and staff is MultiCare's top priority. We understand that accompanying a loved one to a clinic visit is routine and we have implemented visitor guidelines that balance the importance of accompanying patients with minimizing exposure.

**Restricted visiting will be maintained at all MultiCare urgent care and ambulatory clinics until the transmission of COVID-19 is no longer a threat to our patients, staff and community.**

### Definitions:

- **Caregiver/support person:** an individual who is bringing a patient into a facility for care and who is accompanying the patient at the point of entry into the facility
  - Example: a mother bringing a two-year-old child into a clinic
- **Patient:** an individual receiving care
- **Clinical Facility:** a place where patient care is provided (a hospital, off-campus ED, urgent care, ambulatory clinic (e.g., MMA, RWC or MB Specialty Clinics))

**This policy applies to the following areas:** urgent care clinics, primary care clinics, specialty clinics, laboratory, imaging, outpatient surgery, maternal fetal medicine clinics, retail pharmacy.

**All patients and caregivers/support people will be screened at the entrance. It is preferable for patients to be screened in advance of the visit (over the phone), so arrangements for a virtual visit or direct rooming can be made.**

- **Age:** No visitors 17 or under. Please escalate through the appropriate channels if an exception is needed, e.g., childcare situations.
- **Temperature:** Assess for fever (greater than 100.4 or, if 65 or older, greater than 99.6) using a thermometer. Verbal confirmation of a normal temperature taken that day is an acceptable alternative when thermometer is not available.
- **Symptoms:** Cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, headache, congestion or runny nose and GI symptoms like nausea, vomiting or diarrhea

Patients with a "yes" response to any symptoms of COVID-19 should immediately receive a procedure face mask before or upon entering the facility. A cloth mask is not acceptable if the patient has any COVID-19 symptoms.

- Masks may be clinically contraindicated for some patients, such as those with certain behavioral health diagnoses\*\*.
- Any **patient** who declines to wear a mask should be immediately evaluated by the care team (RN, MD, DO, ARNP, PA, etc.) to determine if wearing a mask is clinically inappropriate or would otherwise interfere with the patient's access to needed care. Clinics should make every effort to evaluate or room the patient in a timely manner. If a patient is unable to wear a mask, we should assess the patient's ability to wear a face shield.

- If the patient can wear a mask, but refuses, staff may choose to ask the patient to leave the clinic and assist with scheduling a virtual visit instead.
- If the patient refuses to wear a mask and the care cannot be provided virtually, the care team can determine if the visit should be postponed or if doing so would potentially harm the patient, in which case the patient should be placed in a room with the door closed. All others entering the room should be masked.

\*\*A child age two (2) and under or persons with a medical condition, mental health condition or disability that prevents wearing a face covering. This includes, but is not limited to, persons with a medical condition for whom wearing a face covering could obstruct breathing or who are unconscious, incapacitate or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance. (From the Order of the Secretary of Health on face coverings – 6.24.2020)

**Caregivers/Support Persons** with symptoms of COVID-19 will be advised to consult with their health care provider.

**Only asymptomatic caregivers/support persons will be allowed to accompany a patient to a visit (see exception in pediatric section below).**

- Adult patients may have one (1) asymptomatic caregiver or support person accompany them.
- Pediatric patients (age 17 and under) may be accompanied by two (2) parents or caregivers.
  - If only one parent/caregiver is with a young child and the parent/caregiver is positive with a COVID-19 symptom, provide the essential parent/caregiver with a procedure face mask, quickly room the essential parent/caregiver and child and alert the care team.
- No siblings of any age will be allowed in the clinic unless they have appointment themselves

**Universal Face Covering:** All patients and caregivers/support persons must wear a face covering while in the facility, except as otherwise noted above (i.e., two years old and under, behavioral issues or breathing difficulties).

- A mask will be provided if necessary.
- A patient and caregiver/support person may use their own face coverings, provided they completely cover the person's nose and mouth.
- A face covering with a valve does not provide source protection and a patient or visitor with such a face covering must replace or cover it with one that does not have a valve.
- Patients, caregivers and support persons should maintain a 6-foot distance from others whenever possible and practice hand hygiene while in the health care setting.

**Special considerations:** the following special considerations may necessitate exceptions or adjustments on behalf of individual patients.

- Ensure that the needs of patients and visitors, including those who communicate in a language other than English or who require American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation, can be met during screening.
- Guarantee that the following individuals are allowed to enter the facility, even if the individuals do not meet screening criteria, if the individuals are compliant with the facility's requirements regarding personal protective equipment and other infection control measures and do not pose a separate safety risk as determined by the facility:
  - A caregiver or attendant of a patient who needs assistance due to a language barrier or the patient's disability, whether that disability is physical, developmental, intellectual, cognitive, behavioral or is related to altered mental status or communication, whose presence will assist the person with the disability in receiving treatment, ensure the safety of the patient or facility staff, or who must assist with activities of daily living.
- Implement measures to increase remote communication with families and ensure language access including ASL and spoken language interpretation services, OPI (over-the-phone interpreter) and VRI (video remote interpreter) are available.