

Policy Applies to: All Mercy Hospital staff

Related Standards:

- Health & Disability Service Standards 2008 8134.1.1.12
- ACHS EQuIP Standard 1.6.2

Rationale:

Mercy Hospital embraces the principles of partnership, participation & protection inherent in the Treaty of Waitangi and welcomes the presence and participation of a patient's family as integral to their wellbeing. We support the right of patients to determine who is family / whanau and the role they will play in their care and ask that family / whanau and friends work together with staff so that their presence does not limit safe access to any patient at any time.

Objectives:

- To welcome the patient's family/ whanau as participants (according to the patient's preference) in their care.
- To ensure the patient's rights to safety and privacy are respected.
- To ensure appropriate care is given in a timely manner.

Implementation:

- Reference to the policy in the Patient Information Booklet
- Patient / family friendly version of the policy is available from McAuley Ward, DSU reception area and pre-admission clinic waiting rooms in booklet form.
- Policy available on the website

Evaluation

- Patient Questionnaire
- Incident forms

Associated Documents

External

- Code of Health & Disability Services Consumer Rights Act 1994
- Privacy Act 1993
- Human Rights Act 1993

Internal

- Incidents Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Cultural Policy
- Security Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Infection Control Policies including:

- Specific Disease Management
 - Isolation Policy
 - Blood & Body Fluid
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- Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Information for Patients, Family and Whanau*
 - Contact Isolation, *Information for Patients, Family and Whanau*
 - Emergency policy
 - Fire Programme
 - Roles & Responsibilities in the event of a fire
 - Smoke free Policy
 - Patient Information Booklet
 - Patient Information Pamphlet – “Your Hospital Experience”
 - Reception Work Manual
 - Mercy Hospital ICU: Information for visitors
 - Contractors’ Handbook

References

Institute for Healthcare Improvement (2011). Achieving an Exceptional Patient and Family Experience of Inpatient Hospital Care. *Innovation series 2011*.

Institute for Patient and Family Centred Care (2010). Changing Hospital “Visiting” Policies and Practices: supporting family presence and participation.

Process

Mercy Hospital recognises the important role family/whanau and friends have as part of the patient’s care team.

Visiting Hours

- Visiting hours are designed to maximise a patient’s opportunities for social interaction whilst recognising the comfort and safety of all patients.
- Visiting hours in the ward are from 2pm – 8pm daily. On the weekend, family/whanau and friends will be greeted by staff at the main reception desk on the ground floor before they make their way to the ward.
- Family / whanau are welcome outside of the regular visiting hours; please see the nurse in charge of the ward before going to see the patient.
- When a patient is in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) family members are welcome to sit with the patient at any time.
- In shared rooms, the number of people or length of visits to a patient may be restricted out of consideration to other patients nearby.

- Due to limited space in the Day Surgery Unit, we request that only one family member / friend remain with the patient.
- Visiting restrictions may be initiated by the Infection Prevention & Control Nurse and/or the Director of Clinical Services at times when there are high levels of illness in the community.

Requests by the patient for a family member / friend to stay overnight

- A family member or friend may remain with a patient overnight when the patient will benefit from a support person due to language barriers or to assist in meeting specific cultural or health needs. Wherever possible, this should be arranged prior to the patient's admission to allow an appropriate room to be assigned.
- Late requests for a family member / friend to remain with a patient overnight must be discussed with the nurse in charge, who will consider the nature of the request and the location of the patient. Out of respect for the privacy and dignity of other patients, family members / friends cannot be accommodated in a shared room. Where a request can be met, the family member / friend will be offered a lazy-boy chair. A fee of \$165 including meals may apply; this fee is not covered by ACC, insurance or other payors and is the responsibility of the patient or family member / friend.

Patients' choice to restrict family / whanau & friends

- A patient has the right to choose who is involved in their care and who may visit them.
- In discussion with the patient who has requested no visiting or restricted visiting, nursing staff will notify the ward / unit receptionist and the main reception desk.
- The patient's wish will be documented in the clinical record.
- A sign will be placed on the door to the room or on closed curtains (if the patient is in a shared room) to advise family / friends of their wish for privacy / rest and for messages to be left at the ward reception desk.

Responsibilities of Family / Whanau and Friends

- Mercy Hospital staff ask that family / whanau and friends whose loved ones are sharing rooms with other patients or are in the DSU, be respectful and honour patient privacy.
- There may be times when family / whanau and friends are asked to temporarily leave the room to ensure the privacy of the patient (s) during certain procedures or discussions.
- Family / whanau and friends are asked to work together with staff so that their presence does not limit safe access to any patient at any time. Family /

whanau and friends who have a cold, diarrhoea, viral illness or are generally feeling unwell are asked not to visit, to prevent the spread of infection.

- Family / whanau and friends are invited to gel their hands when entering and exiting the ward or Day Surgery Unit. This helps to minimise the spread of infection and keep patients safe.

Rarely, the hospital may need to limit family presence (in response to public health and / or hospital safety or security concerns); e.g. If a patient is being nursed in contact isolation, access to the patient may be limited to family / friends identified by the patient and they shall be provided with personal protective equipment to wear. The hospital will keep patients and families informed and ensure that these limitations are kept to a minimum.

- Children supervised by a responsible parent/caregiver are welcomed. They must remain with the supervising adult who will monitor their behaviour to ensure a safe and restful environment for the patient(s).
- Please refrain from touching any equipment or tubing associated with the patient's treatment or care. If you have concerns, please ring the bell for the nurse.
- Any incidents or accidents involving family / friends must be notified to staff who will complete an incident report.
- Family/whanau or friends that require medical attention shall be directed to their GP, after-hour's service or in an emergency, to the Dunedin Hospital Emergency department.
- Where a person's behaviour creates a direct risk or threat to patients, families, staff, or others in the immediate environment or is disruptive of the functioning of the patient care unit, they will be asked to leave the premises and security and/or NZ Police will be notified, depending on the situation.
- Smoking in the grounds, car parks or buildings is not permitted as Mercy Hospital is a smoke free campus.

In the event of an emergency

- On the activation of the fire alarm, family / whanau and friends within the inpatient areas will remain with patients unless they have a mobility impairment. In this case they will be assisted by non-nursing personnel to leave the building.
- Following activation of the fire alarm, family / whanau and friends are not permitted to enter the hospital until the 'All Clear' has been given.

Official Visitors/Contractors

All official visitors and/or contractors will have their names recorded in a register at Main Reception/Lower ground floor and will be issued with a visitor's badge.