

Situation: COVID-19 vaccination continues to proceed and is targeted broadly throughout the community. The rate of COVID-19 in the Omaha area, although elevated, is stable. The strict limitation of visitation at Nebraska Medicine is resulting in provider and patient dissatisfaction.

Background / Assessment:

1. Visitors have been limited in the procedural and ambulatory settings during the pandemic to protect our colleagues and our patients.
2. Currently 38.7% of adults in Nebraska have been fully vaccinated for COVID-19 and over half have received at least one dose of vaccine.
3. The rolling 7 day average daily rate of COVID-19 per 100,000 persons in the Omaha metropolitan area is approximately 19 (lower than our peak however still prevalent in the community)
4. Other health care systems in the metropolitan area, as well as some national academic medical centers, have recently liberalized visitation policies
5. As there is increasing vaccinations occurring in the community, we are cautiously optimistic that we can now allow for visitors in these areas.
6. Although liberal general visitation should continue to be discouraged, we realize that having a visitor is beneficial for many patients.

Recommendations:

1. **The visitor committee recommends allowing one visitor for procedural and/or ambulatory patients beginning Monday, May 3.**
2. Messaging to patients (from clinics, MD office staff and centralized scheduling):
 - a. Recognize we are still in the midst of a pandemic and the safety of our patients and colleagues is of the utmost importance. **Visitation continues to be discouraged when it is not in the patient's best interest.** However, when it is advantageous to the patient, visitation is encouraged
 - b. We need to remain vigilant in following CDC guidelines (screening upon arrival, wearing masks, hand-washing, distancing)
 - c. Starting May 3, patients may be permitted one visitor to accompany them for procedural and/or ambulatory visits
 - d. Visitors must be screened at the entry points and receive the "blue" sticker. They will not be permitted if they do not pass the screening questions
3. Steps for procedural and ambulatory locations:
 - a. Assure waiting rooms are arranged to allow for distancing
 - b. Assure plan for overflow should waiting room become crowded
 - c. Assure signage for "no food or drink" in waiting rooms is present (this should already have been in place prior to the pandemic).
 - d. Should a patient arrive with more than one visitor, enforce only one visitor is permitted
 - e. Of note ... the date of Monday, May 3 was chosen to allow for procedural and ambulatory areas to assure above steps are completed
4. **The current inpatient visitor policy remains the same at this time.**
5. Visitors for procedural and/or ambulatory visits do not need to be documented in One Chart.
6. The ID team and the visitor committee will continue to monitor vaccination rates and transmission rates ... **these visitor recommendations are subject to change at short notice should the community rates change.**