POLICY TITLE: **Visitation**	IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: **RI133**

POLICY LEVEL:	Division	**ORIGINATION/EFFECTIVE DATE**	12/2/2024
FACILITY:	Louisiana RISE Community Hospital Sites	**REVIEW CYCLE:**	Two Years
DEPARTMENT(S):	All departments	**LAST REVIEW DATE:**	11/4/2026
		LAST REVISION DATE:	11/4/2026
REVISION:	B		

POLICY STATEMENT

RISE Community Hospital (RCH) provides a caring, patient-centered environment while recognizing the vital role visitation plays in patient recovery, emotional well-being, and health outcomes. These guidelines ensure that patients and their designated support individuals are afforded full visitation rights in compliance with Louisiana law and federal regulations, while maintaining safety, security, and quality care standards.

PURPOSE

To establish clear, non-discriminatory guidelines for patient visitation at RCH facilities in accordance with La. R.S. 40:1300.55 (Essential Caregiver Visitation), La. R.S. 40:2005, La. R.S. 40:2005.1 (Clergy Access), and CMS Conditions of Participation. Each patient (or their legal decision-maker) has the right to designate visitors of their choice and to withdraw or deny consent at any time.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all patients, visitors, clinical units, and administrative areas across all RCH hospital sites. Information regarding visitation rights is posted in emergency and ambulatory care areas and provided to each patient.

DEFINITIONS

- Visitor- Any individual granted permission by the patient (or patient's designated representative) to enter the care area as a companion or support person.
- Designated Essential Caregiver (DEC): An individual designated by the patient (or legal representative) under La. R.S. 40:1300.55 to provide daily, in-person visitation and support. The DEC is not required to provide direct medical or personal care to the patient.
- Religious / Spiritual Support Person: A member of the clergy or a designated spiritual advisor authorized to provide religious or spiritual support to a patient.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All healthcare staff and employees are responsible for the enforcement of this policy. Employees visiting patients are also subject to the information listed in this document.

NON-DISCRIMINATION MANDATE

In accordance with La. R.S. 40:2005 and federal regulations, visitation privileges shall not be denied, restricted, or limited on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, or immunization status. All designated visitors enjoy equal visitation privileges consistent with patient preferences and clinical safety guidelines.

PROCEDURES

General Visitation Rules

1. Standard Hours & Bedside Limits: General visitation is permitted daily. Visitors are generally limited to two (2) at

a time per bedside to ensure patient comfort, privacy, and safety, subject to clinical discretion.
2. Minors: Visitors under the age of 18 must be accompanied and closely supervised by an adult at all times. The patient may not serve as the accompanying adult for visiting minors. Minors are not permitted in patient care areas between 9:00 PM and 8:00 AM.
3. Visitor Conduct: Visitors are expected to conduct themselves in a courteous manner, refrain from smoking or vaping (RCH is a tobacco-free institution), avoid loud conversations or loitering in hallways, and dress appropriately.
4. Health Screening: Visitors must be free from fever or visible signs of communicable illness. During community health outbreaks, visitors must comply with infection control protocols recommended by Healthcare Epidemiology.

Essential Caregiver Rights (La. R.S. 40:1300.55)

1. Daily In-Person Access: RCH facilitates daily in-person visitation for at least one (1) Designated Essential Caregiver (DEC). Access for a DEC will not be restricted except when mandated by clinical determination, law, or court order.
2. No Advance Notice: RCH does not require a DEC to provide advance notice prior to visiting.
3. Safety Protocols: A DEC must agree to comply with facility infection control guidelines, hand hygiene protocols, and required personal protective equipment (PPE).

Access to Clergy & Spiritual Support

1. Patients may receive visits from a religious or spiritual support person in addition to their DEC and general visitors.
2. For specific rules, safety protocols, and operational requirements governing clergy access during declared public health emergencies, refer to Policy RI-135: Clergy Member Visitation During a Declared Public Health Emergency.

Clinical Exceptions & Patient Care

1. Clinical Justification: Any restriction or limitation placed on general visitation must be based on a reasonable clinical or safety determination made by nursing staff in coordination with the attending physician.
2. Resuscitation & Invasive Procedures: Where clinically appropriate, designated support individuals may be permitted present during resuscitation or invasive procedures.
3. Discharge Education: Family members or designated caregivers should be included in discharge teaching and planning whenever applicable.

APPROVAL

POLICY OWNER	Matt Alewine, RN, MSN Chief Nursing Officer
COMMITTEE	Patient Care & Safety Committee
MEDICAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	Dr. Jessica Hetherington MD Chief Medical Officer
GOVERNING BODY	RISEONE Governing Body

REVISION	CHANGES	DEPARTMENT APPROVAL	COMMITTEE APPROVAL	MEC APPROVAL	GB APPROVAL
New	Initial Release	12/2/2024	12/2/2024	12/2/2024	12/2/2024
A	Standard review cycle. Updated to include all sites.	5/12/2026	5/12/2026	5/13/2026	5/13/2026

B	Revised to integrate La. R.S. 40:1300.55 (Essential Caregivers), non-discrimination mandates, and cross-reference Policy RI-135 for PHE clergy visitation.	11/4/2026	11/4/2026	11/4/2026	11/4/2026