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An important update regarding hospital visitor policies

Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls, Wis. – As the fast-spreading COVID-19 Delta variant continues to affect our communities, Hospital Sisters Health System (HSHS) is working to control the spread by updating visitor policies at the following western Wisconsin hospitals, **effective Tuesday, August 24, 2021:**

- HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital, Eau Claire
- HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital, Chippewa Falls

The visitor restrictions are as follows:

- Visitors under age 12 are not permitted.
- Patients may have up to TWO (2) visitors per day. (The visitors must be the same two people each day; *visitors may **not** rotate in and out with other individuals*)
- All patients nearing end-of-life will have special arrangements made on a case-by-case basis.
- Patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 may not have visitors; *the only exception to this is a pediatric patient and other special circumstances that will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.*

In addition, all visitors MUST continue to be screened for COVID-19 symptoms and exposure upon entering our hospital(s). Visitors who have any of the following symptoms or are not feeling well will NOT be allowed to visit:

- Fever (greater than 100.0 F) or chills
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Loss of sense of taste or smell
- Exposure in the past 14 days to a person confirmed to have COVID-19
- If the visitor had COVID-19 he/she may not come to the hospital until 14 days after onset of symptoms or positive COVID-19 test AND at least 24 hours fever free with improvement in symptoms

All visitors approved for entry into the hospital(s) must adhere to following guidelines:

- Wear a facemask that covers the nose and mouth at all times; a face shield is not acceptable in place of a mask.
- Use hand sanitizer to clean hands upon entering the hospital, entering a patient room and prior to exiting a patient room.
- Remain in patient room or in space designated by hospital colleague.

If additional family members have concerns or questions, they can call our hospitals; we know how important it is for loved ones to be able to connect with their patients during times of need. In an effort minimize interruptions to bedside caregivers, we do ask each patient to designate one individual who can serve as the spokesperson to their friends/family. This individual will be able to call the nurse and receive detailed updates on the patient's status.

We do encourage loved ones to call their patient's room for a telephone visit, or use cell phones to text, call or video chat with them. The main numbers for our hospitals are below and an operator can connect them to patients' rooms:

- HSHS Sacred Heart: (715) 717-4121
- HSHS St. Joseph's: (715) 723-1811

Thank you for your patience and understanding. We are caring for vulnerable populations within our walls and need to ensure that we remain extremely vigilant when it comes to COVID-19; this includes the care of our patients, staff and approved visitors.

The updated visitor policies are also available for reference on the hospitals' websites:

www.HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital and www.HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital

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About HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital

[HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital](http://www.HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital) is sponsored by Hospital Sisters Ministries, the [Hospital Sisters of St. Francis](http://www.Hospital Sisters of St. Francis) is the Founding Institute, and it is an affiliate of [Hospital Sisters Health System](http://www.Hospital Sisters Health System). Since 1889, it has been meeting patient needs in western Wisconsin with the latest medical innovations and technology, together with a Franciscan whole-person healing tradition.

About HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital

[HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital](http://www.HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital) is sponsored by Hospital Sisters Ministries, the [Hospital Sisters of St. Francis](http://www.Hospital Sisters of St. Francis) is the Founding Institute, and it is an affiliate of [Hospital Sisters Health System](http://www.Hospital Sisters Health System). Since 1885, it has served the people of the Chippewa Falls area with health care that is high tech and high touch. Known locally for the quality of the care it provides patients, the hospital has been recognized nationally for its outstanding patient satisfaction levels.

About Hospital Sisters Health System

Hospital Sisters Health System's (HSHS) mission is to reveal and embody Christ's healing love for all people through our high quality, Franciscan health care ministry. HSHS provides state-of-the-art health care to our patients and is dedicated to serving all people, especially the most vulnerable, at each of our physician practices and 15 local hospitals in two states - Illinois (Breese, Decatur, Effingham, Greenville, Highland, Litchfield, O'Fallon, Shelbyville and Springfield) and Wisconsin (Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, Oconto Falls, Sheboygan, and two in Green Bay). HSHS is sponsored by Hospital Sisters Ministries, and [Hospital Sisters of St. Francis](http://www.Hospital Sisters of St. Francis) is the founding institute. For more information about HSHS, visit www.hshs.org. For more information about Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, visit www.hospitalsisters.org.