

The Pembroke Regional Hospital Asks For Community's Cooperation Regarding Visitor Restrictions In Order To Keep Patients And Staff Safe

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 23, 2020

PEMBROKE – While COVID-19 restrictions are being gradually lifted throughout the province, the public is being reminded that visitor restrictions must remain in place in hospitals in order to keep patients and staff safe.

For the safety of patients and staff, each patient is allowed only one of these “visitors” per day. Each visitor will be required to sign in at the patient’s Nursing Station before the visit can take place.

“We have been very fortunate in Renfrew County and many areas of the province in terms of having very few community-based transmissions of COVID-19, but this has only been accomplished by adhering to guidelines and taking all necessary precautions,” said Sabine Mersmann, Vice-President of Clinical and Support Services / Partnerships and Integration.

“We recognize how difficult it has been for patients to not have visitors during their hospital stay or someone accompanying them to a procedure or appointment, but this is not the time for multiple people to visit. Visitors must be limited to only those who are part of a patient’s care team, those that currently live with them, or those that they have been maintaining physical contact with. It is not the time for ‘social visits’,” Ms. Mersmann said.

As announced June 19th, the only “visitors” currently allowed at PRH are those identified as “family caregivers or care partners” by the patient.

Family caregivers or care partners include, but are not limited to those who provide:

- Assistance with meals, mobility and personal care**
- Communication assistance for patients with hearing, visual, speech, cognitive, intellectual or memory impairments**
- Assistance as the designated representative for patients with disabilities**
- Emotional support**
- Supported decision making**

Family caregivers or care partners can include a loved one, a friend, a religious or spiritual care provider, or other support person of the patient’s choosing. Only one family caregiver or care partner is permitted at a time, per patient, and each must wear a mask and any additional personal protective equipment deemed necessary.

In addition, all family caregivers or care partners must pass the hospital's entrance screening criteria in order to be allowed to visit and must:

- **Be feeling well.**
- **Continuously wear a mask that covers the nose and mouth.**
- **Refrain from bringing in food or drink for consumption since a mask must be worn for the entire duration of the visit.**
- **Report directly to the patient's Nursing Station prior to visitation.**
- **Remain in the patient's room and minimize movement within the facility.**
- **Perform hand hygiene (hand washing or using hand sanitizer) when entering and leaving the facility and when entering and leaving the patient's room.**

In addition, if a patient is undergoing testing for COVID-19 it is recommended that the designated family caregiver or care partner delay visitation until test results have been received and there is clearer direction on that individual's care plan.

"We are hopeful that as we gradually welcome people back in the facility that, in the interest of safety, our patients' loved ones will respect the rules and help to keep their family members and our staff safe," Ms. Mersmann said, adding that those who cannot will be asked to leave.

In the days and weeks ahead, PRH anticipates that additional amendments will be made to the hospital's Visitor Policy based on new guidance from Ontario Health or in order to create consistency with practices in other hospitals in our region.

All changes will be communicated to the public through local media and the hospital's social media channels.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Carolyn Levesque

Public Affairs and Communications Coordinator

Pembroke Regional Hospital

(613) 732-3675, extension 6165

Carolyn.levesque@prh.email