

POLICY: Equal Visitation Policy

It is the policy of Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center to promote patient and family- centered care while providing a therapeutic environment for patients and a safe environment for patients, family, visitors, and staff.

Geisinger will provide notice to patients or their Support Persons (where appropriate) of their visitation rights, including the right to receive, subject to the patient's consent, visitors designated by the patient, including but not limited to a spouse, civil union partner, domestic partner (including a same sex partner), another family member, or a friend. The notice must also advise of the patient's right to withdraw or deny consent at any time either orally or in writing. The provision of notice will be documented in the medical record.

Geisinger will not restrict, limit, or deny visitation privileges based on race, skin color, age, national origin, ancestry, nationality, religion, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or disability. All visitors enjoy full and equal visitation privileges consistent with patient privileges and the limitations set forth in this policy. All hospitalized patients have the right to have visitors of their choice during their stay, unless visitation interferes with the well-being, rights or safety of others, or is not medically indicated in the patient's care.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance regarding the presence and participation of families and to ensure that all visitors enjoy full and equal visitation privileges consistent with patient preferences and to promote a safe and therapeutic environment.

For purposes of Geisinger Wyoming Valley's Medical Centers hospital-wide visitation policy: "Family" means any person(s) who plays a significant role in an individual's life. This may include a person(s) not legally related to the individual. Members of "family" include spouses, **domestic partners, partners in civil union** and both different-sex and **same-sex significant others**. "Family" includes a **minor patient's parents, regardless of the gender of either parent**.

FAMILY PRESENCE AND PARTICIPATION is encouraged. Family members, as identified by the patient, provide support, comfort, and important information during ambulatory care experiences, a hospital stay in critical care, medical/surgical, and specialty units, an emergency room visit, and in the transition to home and community care.

Families are requested to designate a family spokesperson to facilitate effective communication among extended family members and hospital staff. The health care team of Geisinger can arrange for designated times to provide guidance to the patient and family to make care decisions.