

Document No: 45567

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TITLE: Visitor / Manuhiri Procedure during COVID-19 PANDEMIC

1. Public Health Emergency

In the event of a public health emergency such as a pandemic, Lakes District Health Board reserves the right to restrict visitor access and numbers.

2. Statement

The purpose of this procedure is to provide advice on access by members of family / whānau, carers and support person/people who are visiting patients, or providing support to patients on all DHB campuses during the COVID-19 pandemic response.

The purpose of whānau as partners in care is to ensure that whānau journeys through the health system are well guided, safe and respectful.

As a DHB we recognise whānau support is essential to patients' lives and plays an important part in patient care, treatment and recovery.

As COVID-19 is managed in the community we are committed to enabling access to whānau for patients in our care and to support outpatients whilst balancing risk of COVID-19 and the risk of harm of not having whānau visit.

The primary purpose of our policy is to reduce risk of infection within our hospital and community hubs and to keep our most vulnerable people safe.

The visitor's policy will remain consistent throughout operating with COVID-19 unless the EOC determines that additional steps need to be taken to reduce risk and increase the safety for both patients and staff.

3. Scope

- This visitor's procedure applies to all LDHB patient areas on all sites for the duration of the COVID-19 Pandemic or until advised otherwise.
- It excludes any restrictions relating to Mortuary Services.
- This guidance does not extend to support persons entering the DHB sites to provide essential services, eg interpreters for patients with limited or no English.

Lakes District Health Board		Key Word: Visitor, visitors, Caregiver, Support, visiting, visit, hours		File: 45567	
Authorised by:	Issue Date: 9 December 2021	Review Date: 9 December 2022	Authorised Version Thirteen (13)	Page 1 of 7	

4. Relevant Legislation

In accordance with District Health Boards' responsibilities under Section 23 of the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000 to plan and co-ordinate at local, regional, and national levels for the most effective and efficient delivery of health services, all District Health Boards must act consistently with the following national-level plans and policies:

- a) The Government response to the COVID-19 pandemic, informed by the New Zealand Influenza Pandemic Plan, a framework for action (Ministry of Health 2017); and
- b) The National Health Emergency Plan (Ministry of Health 2015).

This guidance is active for as long as an Epidemic Notice under the Epidemic Preparedness Act 2006 remains in force.

5. Definitions

Consumer, patient, client: A user of any of the health or disability services provided by Lakes DHB.

Visitor/Manuhiri: The person or persons visiting a patient(s), including staff members who may be visiting a family member/friend for a short period of time during designated visiting time

Business Visitor: Any person(s) including contractors, sales representatives not employed by Lakes DHB who are on-site for business purposes.

Restricted Area: Any area defined by signage as restricted or as authorised entry only.

Spokesperson: An individual identified by the patient or family to accompany the patient and act as the key liaison and contact person.

Support Person: A support person is someone who has been identified by the patient to provide emotional and / or practical support to them during their appointment or stay. This may also include a legal Enduring Power of Attorney (EPOA).

DAMHS: Director Area Mental Health Services – provides guidance and advice pertaining to the Mental Health Act (MHA) and patients subject to that

Lakes District Health Board		Key Word: Visitor, visitors, Caregiver, Support, visiting, visit, hours		File: 45567	
Authorised by:	Issue Date: 9 December 2021	Review Date: 9 December 2022	Authorised Version Thirteen (13)	Page 2 of 7	

Act. Specifically, for proposed patients under Section 9 of the Act.

Palliative Patient:	A patient who in discussion with their clinical team has been identified as palliative – this does not mean they are actively in their last days of life.
End of Life:	An individual who has been identified as being in their last days of life
Child:	An individual under the age of 16 years
Vulnerable person:	A patient who may be elderly, have physical disabilities, be suffering from disorders affecting cognition and/or behaviour - consideration must also be made for the nature of the admission and the length of stay for a patient which may increase the potential for the psychological

6. General Principles and Guidelines

There is an expectation that staff will adhere to the values of Lakes DHB - Manaakitanga, Integrity and Accountability. Lakes DHB cannot eliminate the risk of introduction and spread of COVID-19 in hospital without removing and restricting all people from the hospital. This is not practical nor in the public/patient interest. DHBs have introduced several controls which enable decisions based on risk assessment to maintain patient, worker and visitor safety.

- All entry to the hospital is at the DHB discretion. All visitors and support persons entering our facilities will be expected to comply with any requirements in place to maintain safety.
- Masks must be worn at all times at all of our DHB sites - this reduces risk to our vulnerable population. Mask exemptions are not permitted at DHB sites as we must prioritise the safety of our patients therefore anybody that presents without a mask may be refused entry. Physical distancing must be maintained whenever possible.
- All visitors and support persons must complete the screening process when accessing the hospital.
- Anyone who is perceived as high risk, eg recent contact with a suspected or confirmed COVID positive case, or has acute respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, sore throat or fever) or abdominal pain and , or those who have been at an area of interest will not be allowed to visit and will be advised to call Healthline or contact their GP.

Lakes District Health Board		Key Word: Visitor, visitors, Caregiver, Support, visiting, visit, hours		File: 45567	
Authorised by:	Issue Date: 9 December 2021	Review Date: 9 December 2022	Authorised Version Thirteen (13)	Page 3 of 7	

- All visitors and support people must wear additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when required and requested to do so, and adhere to all requests in respect to infection control procedures depending upon individual unit requirements.
- No children under the age of 12 can be accommodated at this time.
- It is expected that for all patients the designated visitor or support person will be the spokesperson for the family, and will keep the wider whanau informed of the patient's condition as appropriate.
- A patient who has been admitted with suspected or confirmed with COVID-19 is only permitted a visitor at the discretion of the CNM/CMM or after hours Duty Manager, after discussion with members of the senior clinical team and service manager on-call. The reason for this is to ensure Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) processes are adhered to, and to minimise any risk of avoidable transmission.
- Before a support person is allowed to enter an area where there are COVID-19 suspected or positive patients, they must be met by an appropriate staff member who will ensure personal hygiene requirements are met and PPE is appropriately worn.
- If there is a clear breach in appropriate PPE during the visit this person must be advised that they must follow all current testing procedures and isolation requirements.
- Other methods to facilitate communication with family/whanau should be explored is encouraged, such as, Zoom, Skype, Facetime etc. The hospital has free wi-fi access to assist families with this approach.
- Mental Health Inpatient Unit – Te Whare Oranga Tangata o Whakae; where the MHA is commenced and a family/ whānau member is required to witness the Section 9(2)(b) and other options such an audio-link have been exhausted. The DAMHS can allow the family/ whānau member to attend if it is in the best interests of the proposed patient provided all infection control processes are followed.
- Nurse or Midwife in charge or out of hours Duty Managers can assess exception requests on a case by case basis in conjunction with the relevant clinicians and service manager. Any decisions made must be documented in the clinical notes and communicated to the IOC.

Lakes District Health Board		Key Word: Visitor, visitors, Caregiver, Support, visiting, visit, hours		File: 45567	
Authorised by:	Issue Date: 9 December 2021	Review Date: 9 December 2022	Authorised Version Thirteen (13)	Page 4 of 7	

7. Register of visitors and support people

Names and contact details of all visitors and support people will be recorded in a sign-in book at the point of entry if the individuals do not have the COVID app to utilise the DHB QR codes that are available.

Approved support people information must be conveyed to the duty managers and security and registered at the Hospital Entrance.

If a patient has a support person and a visitor arrives, an exchange should occur so the patient only has one person at the bedside at any one time, this is to ensure appropriate physical distancing.

8. Staff Responsibilities

- All staff to maintain respectful communication with families/whanau, treating each person with dignity and respect.
- All staff to partner with families/whanau to monitor and implement this policy.
- All staff to work with Maori health teams to ensure cultural aspects of care are maintained.
- All staff to ensure they call security immediately if the behaviour from visitors does not meet the expected standards.
- All staff to help to enable alternative means of communication between patients and whanau/families.
- All staff when discussing any patient conditions over the phone, ensure normal privacy restrictions are maintained.
- All staff are reminded that they should not facilitate entry to any non staff/visitors and/or support people through any entry except the public / main entrances at Rotorua Hospital or the identified entrance at Taupo Hospital

Note: That whanau liaison will need to be increased as the response level increases. Please check frequently with patients if they need support to communicate with whanau.

9. Responsibilities of visitors and support people

Visitors are expected to behave in a manner respectful of both the patient they are visiting, to other patients, and the facility in general. Lakes DHB has a zero tolerance for any violence and/or aggression. These are extraordinary circumstances and all parties need to recognise this. Support for teams can be accessed through security, Duty Managers, with the Maori Health Team, and Te Aka Matua in Rotorua Hospital. Chaplaincy is available to help in Taupo Hospital.

Lakes District Health Board		Key Word: Visitor, visitors, Caregiver, Support, visiting, visit, hours		File: 45567	
Authorised by:	Issue Date: 9 December 2021	Review Date: 9 December 2022	Authorised Version Thirteen (13)	Page 5 of 7	

10. Hospital access

Rotorua Hospital

At different levels access to the hospital will be through identified entrances dependent on need. During any COVID-19 emergency situation, the premises can also be placed in lock-down.

Taupo Hospital

The entrance will be clearly identified.

Authorised by:

Gerrie Snyman, Chief Medical Officer

Nina Hartley, Acting DONM

Alan Wilson, Chief Operations Officer

Gary Lees, EOC Incident Controller

Lakes District Health Board		Key Word: Visitor, visitors, Caregiver, Support, visiting, visit, hours		File: 45567	
Authorised by:	Issue Date: 9 December 2021	Review Date: 9 December 2022	Authorised Version Thirteen (13)	Page 6 of 7	

LAKES DHB VISITING / SUPPORTING PERSON'S FRAMEWORK

Area	Visitors
Inpatient areas: (excluding Red Zones/restricted areas)	1 consistent person to visit 11.00 to 13.00 (11am to 1pm) 1 consistent person to visit 1600 to 1900 (4pm to 7pm) A different visitor may attend each session
All Areas	Support Persons – A support person is not restricted to visiting hours
	If required please ensure visitors and support person swap out at the bedside to maintain physical distancing. A support person should remain consistent unless agreed by the Nurse or Midwife in charge or after hours Duty Manager
RED ZONES (Restricted Areas)	A patient with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 MAY be able to have a pre-arranged support person organised by the Nurse/Midwife in charge and approved by the patient's clinician. The identified support person must wear full PPE and will need to stay with the patient. The clinical area must be able to safely support the correct use of PPE – additional resources may be required.
Emergency Department	1 continuous support person per patient if required – must stay with the patient and wear PPE as advised.
ICU/CCU	1 support person for a child under 16 or a vulnerable adult.
Adult Inpatient	1 support person for a vulnerable adult
Paediatrics	1 support person
SCBU	1 support person in addition to birth mother
Maternity Services	1 support person can accompany mother into the birthing unit and remain with the mother for their post-natal stay.
Outpatient Services	1 support person if required
Theatres	In order to achieve physical distancing requirements only. 1 support person allowed if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child under the age of 18 ▪ Maternity ▪ Vulnerable person ▪ Planned Care if agreed with Scheduled Manager ▪ Emergency/Trauma as determined by the Clinical Team
End of Life	2 support persons

Actions that may be taken under the direction of the Incident Controller dependent on the hospital situation include:

- Reduction or stopping of visiting;
- Restriction of the movement of support persons in and out of the hospital;
- Reduction of support persons for ED to only those patients under 16 or a vulnerable adult.

Lakes District Health Board		Key Word: Visitor, visitors, Caregiver, Support, visiting, visit, hours		File: 45567	
Authorised by:	Issue Date: 9 December 2021	Review Date: 9 December 2022	Authorised Version Thirteen (13)	Page 7 of 7	