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Owner **Maureen Leckie:**  
1017 AVP -  
Ambulatory  
Operations  
Department **Ambulatory**

## Companion Policy-Lakeland Regional Health Physician Group- AMB.0021

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to create a welcoming and healing environment for our patients at Lakeland Regional Health Physician Group (LRHPG) Practices. We understand that affiliation needs are recognized as part of the healing process and are met through interactions with **Care Partners**, visiting friends, family members and others. We will treat all patients, Care Partners, and **visitors** with kindness, dignity and respect while recognizing our utmost responsibility to maintain a secure and efficient atmosphere for all who enter our campus. Our aim through this policy is to provide the right balance of a friendly, welcoming environment with a safe, orderly, and tranquil setting that will allow Care Partners and visitors to take part in the patient's office visit and care planning. Our policies guide our practices and ensure that we place people at the heart of all we do to deliver the best outcomes and safest care.

### APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to Lakeland Regional Health Ambulatory Division's **Workforce**. Hospital-based outpatient departments located within Ambulatory Division offices are not subject to this policy, but are covered under policy AD.0136 (Visitation and Welcoming Presence for Patients, Family and Visitors).

### POLICY

Care Partners are encouraged to be a part of our patients' office visit, care planning and wellness as outlined through the following procedures.

### PROCEDURE

1. LRHPG values **patient and family-centered care** and allows visitors to accompany patients at our outpatient clinics so patients can have support during their office visits from a family

member or Care Partner.

2. Our Safety & Security team partners with our Clinical and Administrative teams to maintain an environment of healing. LRHPG promotes a welcoming environment for its patients and encourages visitors for patient appointments. We reserve the right to intervene when necessary if individuals are identified as a threat or a risk to patients, employees, volunteers, physicians or other visitors. Likewise, because we value the safety of all patients, employees and guests, individuals who display disruptive behavior will not be permitted on our campus.
3. Depending on the needs of our patients and specific appointment types or specialty, visiting guidelines may be determined on a case-by-case basis. For example, to respect the collective needs of the patients in a given area, we may find it necessary to modify these guidelines at times which may result in limited visitation, age limitations, etc.
4. In order to promote a healthy environment and protect our patients from additional illnesses, visitors who do not feel well, have a fever or rash, or who have been exposed to an infectious and contagious illness are respectfully requested to refrain from accompanying patients to their appointment. Because LRHPG values our patient's safety, we may deny visitors of a patient if the visitor could negatively affect the patient's care.
5. Consistent with Florida statutes and 59AER23-2 (Standards for the Appropriate Use of Facial Coverings for Infection Control), we may require a companion/visitor to wear a facial covering only when the companion/visitor is:
  - a. Exhibiting signs or symptoms of or has a diagnosed infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission,
  - b. In sterile areas of the health care ambulatory setting or an area where sterile procedures are being performed,
  - c. In an ambulatory setting with a patient who is exhibiting signs or symptoms of or has a diagnosed infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission, or
  - d. Accompanying a patient whose treating health care practitioner has diagnosed the patient with or confirmed a condition affecting the immune system in a manner which is known to increase risk of transmission of an infection from employees without signs or symptoms of infection to a patient and whose treating practitioner has determined that the use of facial coverings is necessary for the patient's safety.
6. Visitors may opt out of wearing a facial covering if an alternative method of infection control or infectious disease prevention is available.
7. Education regarding visitation requirements will be provided on our website.
8. LRHPG has the right to change these guidelines or this policy without prior notice to address emergent health and/or safety needs in the community or at LRHPG.

## DEFINITIONS

**Care Partner:** A Care Partner is chosen by the patient and may be a family member, friend, or other individual who can be present and available for emotional support during the patient's office visit, supporting the patient in his or her beliefs. The Care Partner is encouraged to actively participate in the patient's plan of care. The Care Partner may or may not be the patient's surrogate decision-maker, or

legally authorized representative. HIPAA regulations still apply.

**Patient and Family Centered Care:** Defined by the Institute for Patient and Family Centered Care as healthcare founded on partnerships between providers, patients, and family members. Families play a vital role in the health and wellbeing of patients of all ages by providing attentive reassurance, assisting in mutual problem solving, and fulfilling affiliation needs. Emotional, social, and developmental support are all key components of healthcare that contribute to the dignity and autonomy of the patient.

**Visitor:** A visitor is defined as any individual who is not a patient, Care Partner, volunteer, treating physician, or business invitee/sales representative.

**Workforce:** All LRH employees, volunteers, trainees/students, contractors, and medical staff.

## REFERENCES

None

### Approval Signatures

Step Description	Approver	Date
	Danielle Drummond: 0001 President & Chief Executive Officer - LRHS	07/2023
	Jonn Hoppe: 1011 Executive VP, Chief Legal Officer-General Cou	07/2023
	Francisco Chebly: MD	07/2023
	Maureen Leckie: 1017 AVP - Ambulatory Operations	07/2023