

1.0 Purpose

1.1 As the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) situation continues to evolve, Hill House is taking additional precautions to keep patients, families, staff, referring physicians and volunteers safe. The hospice is committed to patient and family-centred palliative and end-of-life care and will make every effort to ensure the needs of patients and families are met during the implementation of this interim COVID policy.

Essential Visitor(s) or Family member/caregiver for purposes of visitation is defined by the individual patient, parent(s)/legal guardian or personal representative(s) and is usually one or more individuals who play a significant role in a patient's life. "Family" members may be related in many different ways – biologically, legally, or emotionally. Thus a patient's family member could include a person(s) who is not legally related to the individual. "Family" explicitly includes but is not limited to a spouse, a family member, a friend, a domestic partner/civil union partner/significant other, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. When the patient is unable to define family, the patient's next of kin or substitute decision maker provides the definition. An essential visitor list may comprise family, caregiver, or other person who plays a significant role in the patient's life.

At this time, there is no age restriction for a visitor. The essential visitor list is limited to 4 people. A family member or caregiver who has tested positive for COVID-19 is not permitted to enter the House.

2.0 Guiding Principles

- 2.1.1 Minimize risk to patient safety by preventing community spread of infection in the House. The House is compassionately and responsibly restricting the number of visitors and visiting hours to reduce community spread.
- 2.1.2 Minimize risk to nurses, PSWs, volunteers and administrative staff as well service contractors
- 2.1.3 Support the emotional wellbeing of patients, staff and volunteers.
- 2.1.4 Manage the use of resources and supplies and personal protection equipment for the safety of the House and those who are present.

3.0 Visitation

Visitation by family members/caregivers is limited. **Effective March 30, 2020, 7:00 am, one (1) family member/caregiver is allowed per patient daily.** This may expand or constrict depending on directives from Public Health and/or Ministry of Health. However, the number of visitors may be revisited at such time that the patient is imminent. ****Imminent is determined by the nurse on duty and is characterized as dying within hours****

- 3.1.1 Visiting hours are from 07:00 to 21:00 daily.
- 3.1.2 Overnight visits are suspended at this time. This is for the safety of patients, families, staff and volunteers as a measure to reduce traffic in the house thus mitigating the risk of spread. **EXCEPTION:** Overnight/after hours visits are permissible when the patient is imminent, as determined by the nurse on duty and defined as "dying within hours". **In accordance with 3.0, up to 4 (maximum) visitors** from the Essential Visitor list may be present. In this situation, the overnight/after hours visitor(s) is restricted to the patient's room and the upstairs washroom facilities. All visitors will be provided a mask and other appropriate personal protective equipment as appropriate. **NO ACCESS TO COMMON AREAS IS PERMITTED.**

4.0 Procedure

- 4.1.1 Visitors will be screened at the front entrance for using the current screening tool as prescribed by the Ministry of Health or Public Health.
Any family member/caregiver/visitor who fails the screen, is denied access into the house, and provided alternative options to visit such as virtual visits.

All visitors will be provided a mask upon entry.

Visitor Guidelines during COVID-19 V4

This is a time of fluidity and procedures, policies and implementation of directives set by the Ministry of Health and Public Health will continue to be assessed and re-assessed as new information becomes available.

For additional information, clarity or questions regarding this policy, please contact Kimbalin, Terrilynne or Dr. Berger.