


AP- 20 Visiting Policy

	Central Louisiana State Hospital (CLSH)
Policy Number	AP-20
Content	Visiting Policy
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Approved By	CLSH-CEO, signature on file w/policy coordinator
Inquiries to	CEO

I. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of Central Louisiana State Hospital (CLSH) to encourage and support the visitation of patients by their family, friends, clergy, and attorneys as often as possible. In most cases, these visitations can be therapeutic and beneficial to the patient's recovery and speedy discharge when done in cooperation with the treatment plan. Visitors are encouraged to communicate with the patient's social worker regarding the appropriate techniques for making the visit a rewarding and therapeutic experience for all concerned. Patient safety and security is priority, therefore no visit shall take place behind closed doors. Door shall remain ajar to allow staff visualization. Supervision shall be maintained according to the patient's level/precaution status. Accountability and assigned rounds shall be maintained per policy. Any exception to this practice must be approved by the Treatment Team.

Visiting is allowed seven (7) days a week on most services and each service has a designated visitor's lounge. Regular visiting hours are from 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday and 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. Visiting times other than those listed may be permitted with Treatment Team approval. Under certain circumstances, visiting may be restricted on an individual basis for therapeutic reasons when patients are in therapies. Since patients are scheduled for therapies during visiting hours, it is best to check with the doctor, nurse, or social worker on the unit for the best time to visit.

Louisiana Legislative Act 367 effective August 1, 2023, states: in accordance with R.S. 40:2005, any person eighteen years or older may designate those individuals who will not be denied access to visit him in-person during any stay in any hospital, nursing home, or other healthcare facility within the state of Louisiana.

II. PURPOSE

To provide a mechanism for and to encourage visiting of patients by their family, friends, clergy, and attorneys.

III. APPLICABILITY

All hospital settings.

IV. EFFECTIVE DATE

The effective date of this policy is April 1994.

V. POLICY PROVISIONS/PROCEDURES

Visitors are required to register at the Switchboard and review the hospital's HIPAA policy **BEFORE** going to the patient's respective unit and/or designated visitation area. Visitation will not be allowed unless this procedure is followed. All visitors are expected to check with the Unit Nurse upon arriving at the Unit.

Only visitors age 18 and above are authorized to visit on the Units. If available, arrangements may be made to have the patient visit with the underage visitor off the main area of the unit. This should be arranged with the Social Worker at least 72 hours in advance. Visitors under the age of 18 must have an adult with them at all times.

Visitors are urged to bring in only those items deemed absolutely necessary and approved by the program. Contraband items are prohibited, such as glass or ceramic bottles, metal knives, forks, spoons and containers, drugs, alcohol, medication, firearms, devices that record or take pictures, cigarette lighters or matches. Any deviation from this must be approved by the CEO or designee.

To protect the patient's privacy and confidentiality, devices that record or take pictures will be prohibited to be used during visitation. The only exception(s) will be if the patient's Treatment Team deems it necessary for active treatment.

Visitors will not take purses, back packs, book bags, packages, etc. or dangerous objects (such as knives, cigarette lighters, mace, pepper spray, etc.) into a patient unit and/or designated visitation area. Visitors are encouraged to secure their valuables in the trunk of their vehicle or out of sight in their vehicle. If a personal vehicle is unavailable, Security may be notified to store a visitor's purse/package. Valuable items will be inventoried and secured in the security department until the conclusion of the visit. Security personnel may be asked to use the metal detector to determine if there is a dangerous object(s) on a person.

Attorneys are allowed to visit at any time. The patient and attorney shall have the right to communicate in private at all times. Attorneys are encouraged to check with licensed staff regarding patient risk factors prior to meeting in private. At any time and also during a public health emergency, members of the clergy may schedule visits at the request of the patient or his/her legal and/or designated representative. Special consideration shall be given to patients receiving end-of-life care.

Gifts and packages for the patient should be identified. They must be inspected by Nursing personnel before released to the patient. CLSH cannot be responsible for valuables such as jewelry, important papers, small appliances, etc., and recommend they not be brought to the hospital.

Food or beverages that are brought by visitors must be consumed during the visit. Leftovers cannot be stored and must be taken with the visitor upon leaving. Any leftovers remaining on the premises will be discarded.

Patients have the right to consensual nonsexual physical contact such as hand holding or hugging, and provisions to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the patients or residents and the staff of CLSH.

At the initial time of survey, a written copy of CLSH's visitation policies and procedures shall be submitted to the Health Standards Section of the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH). After licensure and upon request, CLSH shall make its visitation policies and procedures available for review by LDH.

CLSH's visitation policies are located on the LDH/OBH public facing site at <https://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/director/detail/217>

MANAGEMENT DISCLOSURES

The Chief Executive Officer reserves the right to add, alter, change, or delete any and all prescribed policies and procedures of the agency as needs dictate without the necessity of giving prior notice and request for consent from employees or employee representatives. This includes the right to add, alter, change, or delete all work assignments, duties, requirements and responsibilities of Sections, Departments, Units, and individual employees. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. All policies are available on the Central Louisiana State Hospital Intranet. Signed originals of each policy are available in the office of the Hospital Administrator.