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**Clergy Visitation Guidelines**

Our Hospital system values the health and well-being of our patients in every facet, including the Spiritual. In a sincere effort to facilitate contact and ministry between yourself and members of your faith community we grant Clergy Visitation privileges to Clergy and lay ministers in local houses of worship. Our desire is to do all we can to facilitate your visit and to put the least number of obstacles possible between you and your vital ministry to our patients. It is important, however, to understand that Clergy visitation privileges are just that… a privilege and not a right. In an effort to serve our patients well (which includes security considerations), we must clearly communicate guidelines that must be followed by anyone exercising Clergy Visitation privileges. It is important to note that anyone, member of the clergy or not, may visit a patient as a regular visitor within visitor guidelines and as long as there are no restrictions in place. Clergy visitation privileges afford you several added benefits beyond those of a regular visitor, however. Some of those include:

1. You would not be counted as a visitor as it applies to limits on number of visitors a patient may have.

2. You may be allowed to see a patient in emergency situations outside of visiting hours.

3. You would have easier access to patients, especially within Maternity, Pediatrics, ICU and ED.

4. You would receive a certain amount of deference from staff as you display your hospital issued identification.

These benefits can be a crucial tool in your ministry to your congregants, and we desire to facilitate that ministry as much as possible! It is critical, however, that you grasp some of our concerns as a Hospital system.

1. The protection of our patients. What may seem like needless and over-the-top protections to you, are actually a desire to do all we can to protect our patients.

2. The privacy of our patients. There are serious HIPPA considerations with Clergy visitation. Please carefully read the HIPAA information sheet and ask any clarifying questions before signing your agreement.

3. The positive experience of our patients. As uplifting and encouraging as your visit may be to our patient, it could also have the exact opposite effect for some of our patient population. While we gladly welcome your ministry to your congregants and those who have specifically requested you, we do not welcome your unsolicited presence or approaches to patients who have not requested your presence.

We will briefly address each of these concerns.

**The Protection of our patients**

* We must account for everyone that is in the building at all times. By accepting and wearing the Clergy badge you agree to sign in and sign out every single time you visit the hospital. This is not optional. Failure to follow this procedure is to forfeit Clergy Visitation Privileges.
* The “Clergy Badge” is the sole possession of our hospital system and must be surrendered upon expiration as well as immediately, any time it is requested of you by a member of our staff. Any confiscation of a badge will be reviewed by this department, and you will be afforded an opportunity to share your thoughts, but a clergy badge must be surrendered immediately and willingly on the spot when it is requested of you by a Hospital employee. Badges may not be kept as “keep-sakes” or memorabilia but must be returned in the event of a move, expiration or any other reason why they are not being used any longer for the purpose issued. All expired, or no longer in use badges must be returned to the Office of Pastoral Care and you agree to do so when you accept the badge. If you cannot agree with these stipulations, please do not complete the application process.
* Clergy members may not demand certain treatment, or demand to see a patient. You can feel free to report to the Pastoral Care Department an incident where you felt you were denied a privilege you should have been afforded, but you may not disregard the instructions of a staff member in the moment, chew them out or badger them. In the spirit of your calling, the
* Pastoral Care Department will hold you to a high standard and will not accept boorish behavior on behalf of those bearing a badge issued by this department. Please understand that in the event of an altercation with a staff member, we will not simply be considering who was “technically right” and who was “technically wrong.” As a Clergy member you will truly be held to the standard of “turning the other cheek,” even when wronged. We will seek to rectify the situation if you were wronged, but if your behavior in the situation in question was not calm and dignified, you may well surrender Clergy visitation privileges regardless of your “rightness” in the issue. If this is too high of a standard, or you are prone to stand-offs and getting your way, you truly should not apply for this badge.
* Badges may only ever be used by the individual they are issued to. Any badge being used by someone other than the individual they are issued to will be immediately confiscated.
* Expired badges must be surrendered immediately. You will need to get a visitor’s pass while reapplying if you are asked for your expired badge while visiting our facilities.
* You must at all times defer to staff and be aware of your surroundings. We need your immediate and full cooperation as situations develop around you.
* You may not enter any restricted areas, or areas marked “for staff only” unless directed to do so by a staff member. The Clergy Badge does NOT grant you access to every area of the Hospital. Please be respectful if ever stopped, questioned or instructed by a staff member.
* Clergy members may freely access general hospital areas (unless otherwise instructed by a staff member), but must first check with staff before entering Maternity, Pediatrics, the ED,

Behavioral Health, NICU or Pediatric ED.

* The protection of our patients (and yourself) extends to hand hygiene. We ask that you wash

your hands (or apply gel) every single time you enter and exit a hospital room. Any staff

member has the duty to stop you and remind you to do this if you are not complying. Patients

know to be watching for this. You agree to do this by accepting the Clergy Badge.

* Please be aware of Isolation signs hanging on doors. Never enter a room with an isolation sign

posted before receiving explicit instructions from the nurse.

* You may not administer communion or give food or drink of any kind to any patient without the permission of their nurse.
* You must submit accurate, up-to-date contact information in your application. You are

responsible for updating contact information with the Pastoral Care Department when it

changes. You are also responsible to update the Pastoral Care Department concerning changes

in your place of worship, as badges are issued THROUGH local houses of worship. You may not

continue to use a badge issued through your former house of worship without updating

information with this department and satisfying any requests.

**The Privacy of our Patients**

There are serious HIPPA considerations with Clergy visitation. Please carefully read the HIPAA

information sheet and ask any clarifying questions before signing your agreement. Please understand

that we are seeking to educate you on the responsibilities of a law ALREADY in place. **This law already**

**applies to you.** It is not something imposed on you by our health system, rather by the Federal

Government.

**The Positive experience of our patients**

* As you visit your congregants in our hospital, or those who have specifically requested your presence, we ask that you remember their frail condition and their need for encouragement and hope. Thank you for leaving difficult or confrontational topics for some other time! Thank you for being sensitive to where they are as they seek to recover in our Hospital.
* No “proselytizing” efforts of any kind are acceptable in the Hospital. You may not randomly pass out tracts or literature of any kind. You may not leave literature in waiting areas. You may not go door to door or patient to patient. Patients are visited daily through the Pastoral Care Department. If you wish to participate in this effort, we would be delighted to process you as Spiritual Care Volunteer. Any Clergy member not complying with these guidelines will immediately be asked to surrender their badge. This is not meant to be a chilling veto of

spontaneous ministry. You may well encounter a situation where you were at the right place at the right time and could genuinely be a help and blessing to someone. By all means, please do so. You may not, however, go around randomly soliciting interaction for the purposes of promoting your church, your ministry or your theological views. You MAY interact with a patient you do not know or did not come to see if requested to do so by staff, patient or family.

* As members of the staff visually identify you as a clergy member and make requests of you to

minister to a patient in need, you may choose to oblige. Please remember in these cases to be

very aware of not pushing your own agenda, but of serving the patient.

* We ask that any patient request for privacy, hesitancy to engage in conversation, or attempt to bring a visit to a close be immediately honored! Please do not, under any circumstances, overstay your welcome, push yourself upon a patient or be insensitive to their needs or desires, even if the patient is your congregant .
* You may not understand, agree with, or wish to comply with these guidelines. We fully understand this and respect your position. Please understand, however, that by accepting the “Clergy Badge” you bind yourself to follow every one of them. You cannot accept the badge, and then chose to select guidelines to disregard based on “conscience” or convenience. If you have real objections, or do not plan to fully cooperate with these regulations, the only honorable thing to do is not apply for or receive a Clergy Badge from this department.

**I have read, understood and fully agree to abide by these Clergy Visitation Guidelines.**

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Printed First and Last Name Signature Date

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*Director of Chaplain Services*