

COVID Visitor, Masking, Temp and Screening Policy Updates

Effective Tuesday, **DECEMBER 28, 2021**

Dear Employees and Providers:

We are seeing a new wave of COVID – Omnicron variant as well as increasing number of Flu A cases. The Omnicron variant of COVID is fast moving, but perhaps less severe.

- Vaccines remain the best public health measure to protect people from COVID-19, slow transmission and reduce the likelihood of new variants emerging.
- Masks offer protection against all COVID variants as well as the flu.

Visitor Policy – **No changes in number of visitors HOWEVER, all visitors must be screened for symptoms on presentation to the hospital.**

- **Currently, or within the last 24 hours, have you had fever greater than 100.4, signs of symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as a cough, shortness of breath or sore throat. (If a visitor, vendor, or contractor shows ANY of the listed symptoms, do not allow entry)**

Only two visitors are allowed at one time, visitors may swap out throughout the day, *Children* under 18 are not allowed into the hospital unless they are seeking treatment or having test or procedures. Visitors that presents ill or with symptoms will not be allowed to stay.

- Inpatient units:
 - **two (2) visitors** allowed at one time per patient between 6 am – 8 pm
 - **one (1) visitor** will be allowed to stay overnight
- Emergency Department:
 - **one (1) visitor** allowed while patient is in room. Visitor may remain in waiting room as long as social distancing is maintained.
- Labor/Delivery/Mother/Baby:
 - **two (2) visitors** allowed at one time + midwife or doula or birthing/Lamaze coach during labor
- PEDs
 - **two (2) visitors** allowed at one time per patient between 6 am – 8 pm
 - **two (2) visitors** will be allowed to stay overnight.
- ICU patients:
 - **two (2) visitors** allowed during ICU visiting hours only; 6 am – 8 pm
 - Waiting in waiting room allowed for emergent purposes if social distancing allows.
- COVID-19 patients:
 - **one (1) visitor** allowed between 6 am – 8 pm These visitors must remain in the patient's room at all times, wearing appropriate PPE.
- Clinics/Urgent Care/Lab/Diagnostics/All Outpatient Areas:
 - **one (1) visitor** allowed

*****All variances must be cleared by Administrative Officer or Infection Control.*****

Abbey Café: Remains open to the public for “**Take Out Dining Only**”. Visitors to the café should not have any illness symptoms and should remain masked at all times. Please remember to social distance in the cafeteria.

Masking in Patient Care Areas Strictly Enforced

Please note that, for the safety of everyone at our hospital and clinics, **masking** will be **strictly enforced** for all employees, providers, patients and guests in **the hospital and clinics** – regardless of vaccination status. Masks

should be worn over nose and chin. Visitors unwilling to comply with our masking policy will be asked to leave, no exceptions. This is being done in alignment with the requirements set forth by the Louisiana Department of Health. All vaccinated employees' badges must show the "COVID-19 Vaccinated" sticker which can be obtained through Employee Health.

Symptom screening for patients and visitors will continue. We will screen patients and not allow sick patients entrance into facility unless they are seeking treatment. Masks and hand sanitizer will be available at all entrances and we will still have employees stationed there to check in visitors and ensure visitation limits are being followed.

Delivery and Vendors, Contract and Students

Vendors, contract employees and students must follow the same masking guidelines as all of our employees and visitors and **should not be allowed in the building without a mask.**

Employees UPDATED:

- Employees should continue to self-monitor their health daily and not come to work with symptoms of COVID or flu. If experiencing symptoms, **stay home and** contact employee health at 898-6242 or 380-7676 for further guidance and testing.
- Reminder: Change your facemask daily and do not reuse PPE.

RETURN TO WORK GUIDANCE – Updated per CDC 12/23/21. Abbeville General will adopt:

COVID positive employees may return to work on day 7 - **if:**

- Employee has a **negative** COVID test **and**
- At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without use of medications **and**
- Symptoms (ie cough, shortness of breath) have improved.

Post COVID testing will be arranged through employee health and employees will be cleared to return to work through employee health. Contact employee health at 898-6242 or 380-7676.

COVID-19 Vaccines – Update:

Louisiana and Vermillion parish vaccination rates are improving however we still have work to do. . Vaccination remains paramount to the health of our patients and colleagues.

- **Employee COVID Vaccines:** 1st, 2nd or booster COVID vaccines are available through employee health **EVERY Wednesday from 6:30am until 3:00pm.** Call ext 6242 or 6285 to make an appointment for your vaccination.
- **Non – employee COVID Vaccines:** COVID vaccines are provided weekly at the Erath Rural Health Clinic. Call 937-5944 to schedule an appointment

Monoclonal Antibody Infusions (MAB)

- Omnicorn variant of COVID is about 90% of all positive cases in Louisiana now.
- The current MAB therapy is resistant to the Omnicorn variant of COVID.
- The infusions have halted until a new medication “Sotrovimab” becomes readily available. Allocations of this medication are expected in January.

COVID-19 cases are sharply increasing in Louisiana as Omicron continues to spread. The important thing to remember is that we have more tools to slow the spread of COVID-19 than we did at this time last year. We know layered prevention strategies can slow the spread of COVID-19:

- Get vaccinated
- If eligible, get boosted
- Wear masks in public indoor spaces, regardless of vaccination status
- Regardless of vaccination status, get tested before and after traveling and prior to gathering with others over the holidays
- Stay home if you are not feeling well
- Wash your hands frequently and well

If you have questions about vaccines, you can speak to a medical professional and learn about vaccination sites near you by calling Louisiana's vaccine hotline at 855-453-0774. For a list of locations near you, visit <https://ldh.la.gov/covidvaccine> or text your ZIP code to GETVAX (438829) in English or VACUNA (822862) in Spanish.