

<p align="center"> <b>NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH</b>  <b>NEW MEXICO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INSTITUTE</b>  at Las Vegas  <b>POLICY STATEMENT</b> </p>	<b>Number: CS 007</b>
	<b>Effective: 3/09/00</b> <b>Revised: 8/25/08</b> <b>Reviewed: 8/25/08</b>
<b>VISITING REGULATIONS</b>	

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the Visiting Rules Regulation and Guidelines for the NMBHI.

**APPLICABILITY**

This policy applies to all employees of the New Mexico Behavioral Health Institute at Las Vegas (NMBHI).

**DEFINITIONS**

**VISITORS:**

Any person who comes to see a patient/client/resident (with exception of an employee during working hours).

**POLICY**

The policy of the NMBHI is that visitation is encouraged unless it is therapeutically contraindicated for the particular patient/client/resident at any point in time or under specific circumstances which are detailed in the patient/client/resident health record.

**RELATED POLICIES**

- ADM 021 Incident Report and Notification
- ADM 033 Contraband-Confiscations and Disposal
- CARE 002 Visitation
- FD 004 Visitation
- PBX 012 Issuing Passes for Visitors

**APPROVED:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** 8/25/08  
**Troy D. Jones, Psy. D., Executive Director/Administrator**

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### PROCEDURE

- I. In-patient and residential facility wide procedures.
  - A. If a patient/client/resident does not wish to receive any visitors or certain visitors, the NMBHI will honor his/her wishes. In the event there is a guardian/legal representative that person's wishes will be honored. Specific visitors will not otherwise be restricted except for therapeutic reasons, which must be documented by a medical staff member's order documented in the medical record and which specifies;
    1. the justification for the restriction;
    2. the nature of the restriction; and
    3. any limitations will be written as a doctor's order and reviewed, renewed or revised on a weekly basis.
  - B. Former patients/residents or staff have same visiting privileges as any other citizen.
  - C. Visitors may be asked to show identification as specified in each division.
  - D. Visitors will be asked to leave if they display behavior, which interferes with the safety, health, or treatment received by the patient/client/resident; or interferes with the rights of the other patients/residents. For example, visitors will be refused entrance if they appear intoxicated and/or are abusive or uncooperative with visitation rules.
  - E. Access and visitation with any patient/client/resident will be provided to any Federal or State investigator or surveyor credentialed to review the facility, representative of Protection and Advocacy, or the patient/client/resident attorney or clergy or others as provided by law.
  - F. If visitors cannot make their visits within the normal visiting hours for a particular unit, the staff will assist in making special arrangements for the visit.
  - G. A copy of the visitation policy will be posted on each unit and provided at the time of admission to guardians/legal representative and potential visitors.
  - H. Use of cameras:
    1. Visitors shall not use cameras or camera phones in patient care areas. Visitors can not take unauthorized photographs of patients, clients or residents.
    2. Visitors shall be made aware of these at the beginning of their visitation and/or signs will be clearly posted on patient care areas. The use of camera phones or camera to take unauthorized pictures is strictly prohibited and that anyone not obeying this directive will be escorted off the premises.
    3. Visitors who wish to take pictures of their loved ones must obtain division

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authorization to take photographs inside the facility.

4. Visitors can not take photographs when it is impossible to exclude patients, clients, residents, or consumers from the photograph.

### **II. Adult Psychiatric Division procedures:**

- A. Visiting hours are 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. The length of visit will be a maximum of two hours unless otherwise prearranged with the treatment team or treating physician.
- B. Visitors must report to the Admissions building to receive a visitor's pass from the switchboard operator and will be required to show identification. Visitors will be directed to a designated area after verifying that the patient has approved the visit.
- C. Children under 13 may not visit in the adult psychiatric units but arrangements can be made in advance for visits to take place in an area off the unit.
- D. All visitors under 18 must be accompanied by a visitor over 18 at all times.
- E. The patient or his/her visitor must obtain an order from the patient's doctor prior to the visitor taking the patient off the grounds.
- F. Any packages or bags brought in by visitors for patients will be searched by unit staff and contraband will be removed and returned to the visitor upon departure or will be turned over to authorities, consistent with NMBHI policy.
- G. Visitors may only bring food to visits that are in pre-packaged plastic containers. No home cooked or fast foods are allowed. All food must be consumed in the course of the visit. Visitors may not leave any food for patients, due to storage and pest control problems. Only plastic drink containers are allowed.
- H. Visitors that present in a manner demonstrating intoxication or behaving in a manner that threatens security (such as belligerent, argumentative or threatening, etc.) will be asked to leave immediately. If indicated, the State Police will be called.
- I. Visits, including pre-scheduled visits, may be canceled or shortened in the event of unit staff shortages, crisis or significant behavior disturbance of the individual patient. Visitors are encouraged to call prior to leaving for the NMBHI to confirm that the visit will occur as scheduled.

### **III. Center for Adolescent Relationships Exploration (C.A.R.E):**

- A. Visits will be scheduled between the hours of 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. seven days a week, and between 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.

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- B. All visits are to be pre-arranged through the C.A.R.E. Unit Social Worker so that the client and team can be notified and decide if he is capable and willing to engage in a visit. In addition, notification will be given to the unit to provide for adequate staffing.
- C. If families are unable to visit during the scheduled time, special arrangements may be made through the C.A.R.E. Unit Social Worker.
- D. Children under 13 are discouraged from visiting, but if such visits occur, they will be held in the family visiting area, or other designated area, and the family will supervise their pre-teen at all times.
- E. Adolescents who require Level I or Level II supervision on C.A.R.E.'s treatment system will need special arrangements for extra staff so that safety issues can adequately be addressed.
- F. Families are informed of this policy at the time of admission and must obtain a visitor's pass from the operator or from the Admissions staff.
- G. Any limitations/restrictions on visitation will be written as a doctor's order and reviewed, renewed or revised on a weekly basis.

### **IV. Long Term Care Division (LTCD)**

- A. The LTCD will provide immediate access and visitation to any resident by family and non-family visitors.
- B. The LTCD will have no formal access or visitation hours and staff will allow access and visitation to any resident any time, 24 hours a day, as long as it does not interfere with the safety, health or treatment received by the resident or with the rights of other residents as determined by the nurse on duty.
- C. The LTCD will provide reasonable access to any resident by agency staff that provide health, social, legal, or other services subject to the resident's right to deny or withdraw consent for these visits at any time.
- D. Food products and personal items may be brought in to residents by visitors but will be checked by Nursing Staff to verify appropriateness of food related to therapeutic diet or to document receipt of personal items.

### **V. Forensic Division:**

- A. Hours during which visitors may be received are limited in the interest of effective treatment and the reasonable efficiency of each unit. The visiting hours are posted so that patients are informed of the times. Visiting hours are generally available on

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weekends and holidays. The hours are sufficiently flexible to accommodate the individual needs of the patient and his/her visitors.

- B. Length of visits and the number of concurrent visitors may also be limited in interest of safety, effective treatment and the reasonable efficiency of each unit. If a minor is approved to visit, a parent or guardian must accompany him/her at all times. The treatment team must pre-approve all visits by minors.
- C. The Forensic Division Social Workers are responsible for developing, monitoring and adjusting the approved visitor list for each patient on their caseload.
- D. The Social Worker will meet with patients to arrange visits. The Social Worker will notify the unit and the Security desk of all scheduled visits. It is recommended that all visits be prescheduled to confirm that the patient is available and that there is sufficient staff to provide the needed supervision during the visit. The Treatment Team and Nursing staff work together to accommodate unscheduled visits by approved visitors whenever possible.
- E. All Forensic Division visitors must first present to the security desk where they record in a log their name, address, time of arrival, and show proof of identification. All visitors must pass through a metal detector. After the visit, the visitors must return to the security desk and sign out, including the time of departure.
- F. All visits are visually monitored by Forensic staff for the duration of the visit. Visits may not take place in an area where they cannot be continuously monitored by Forensic staff. This practice provides that all security measures are followed and is designed to prevent the transfer of contraband. The monitor needs to have a radio to contact security in the event of an emergency.
- G. To check for contraband, all parcels and other items brought for patients by visitors are carefully inspected by Security staff, in the presence of the visitor. Parcels may not be taken to the visit site unless they have been inspected and cleared. Contraband that is not illegal will be returned to the visitor. Illegal contraband will be referred to the State Police. The NMBHI policy and procedure related to contraband will be consistently followed.
- H. Forensic Unit staff will inventory items brought for patients.
- I. Visitors may only bring food to visits that are in pre-packed plastic containers. No home cooked or fast foods are allowed. All food must be consumed in the course of the visit. Visitors may not leave any food for patients, due to storage and pest control problems. Only plastic drink containers are allowed.
- J. Visitors that present in a manner demonstrating intoxication or behaving in a manner

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that threatens security (such as belligerent, argumentative or threatening etc.) will be asked to leave immediately. If indicated, the State Police will be called.

- K. Visits, including pre-scheduled visits, may be canceled or shortened in the event of unit staff shortages, crisis or significant behavior disturbance of the individual patient. Visitors are encouraged to call prior to leaving for the NMBHI to confirm that the visit will occur as scheduled.

### **VI. Adult Residential Care Facility:**

- A. Weekday, Weekend, and holiday hours are 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- B. Visitors must report to the Admissions Building to receive a visitor's pass from the switchboard operator.
- C. All visitors under the age of 18 must be accompanied and supervised at all times by a visitor over 18 years of age.