



## **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** APRIL 7, 2021

**TO:** HOSPITAL FACILITIES OF SAN FRANCISCO

**FROM:** COVID-19 COMMAND CENTER, INFO AND GUIDANCE BRANCH

**RE:** HOSPITAL VISITATION DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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**Background:** The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) updated the [Visitor Limitation Guidance \(AFL 20-38.6\)](#) regarding hospital visitation on March 16, 2021. Given the decreasing COVID-19 case rates and the rising vaccination status of our San Francisco healthcare workers and citizens, the San Francisco Department of Public Health has decided to rescind the current [Health Order C19-06b](#) which limited general hospital visitation to one visitor per day and instead refer to CDPH's more permissive [Visitor Limitation Guidance \(AFL 20-38.6\)](#) **with additional recommendations outlined below**. AFL 20-38.6 expands visitation in facilities in counties with substantial risk levels of transmission (Red Tier) or lower (Orange or Yellow Tiers) and allows expanded visitation for certain individuals, regardless of the county positivity rate. This memo can be accessed at: [www.sfdph.org/dph/files/ig/hospitalvisitation.pdf](http://www.sfdph.org/dph/files/ig/hospitalvisitation.pdf)

Highlighted best practices from AFL 20-38.6 includes:

- Continue to follow appropriate screening, masking, social distancing and other guidelines updated by [CDPH](#) and the [CDC](#)
- Promote visitors and patients to **wear masks at all times** during visits and **limit the duration** of visits to reduce possible transmission of infection
- In line with AFL 20-38.6, hospitals should **promote in room visits only** and **comply with appropriate PPE for all visitors**, regardless of vaccination status

**Additional Recommendations:** Given the ongoing risk for those who remain unvaccinated and the logistical and staffing changes that increasing visitors poses to hospitals, the San Francisco Department of Public Health additionally recommends the following:

- Continue to update your institution's "[COVID-19 Plan](#)" (previously required by [Health Order C19-06b](#)) to ensure the safety of patients, staffs and visitors
- For visitors to COVID-19 patients:
  - Limit the number of visitors and frequency of visits to reduce unnecessary exposures, especially during peak times of infection, as well as to reduce the use of excessive PPE. For example, consider only allowing 1-2 visitors a day or designating 1-2 visitors for the duration of hospitalization.
  - Promote shorter duration visits
- For unvaccinated patients at [higher risk of severe COVID-19](#):
  - Consider limiting the number of visitors and frequency of visits and implementing other measures to reduce risk to the patient. For example, consider only allowing 1-2 visitors a day or 1-2 designated visitors for those who are severely immunocompromised. Hospital facilities may also want to consider testing designated visitors and/or encouraging visitors to quarantine prior to visit and in between visits.



## Resources

Information is changing rapidly. Stay informed:

- California Department of Public Health (CDPH)
  - Hospital Visitor guidance: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCQ/LCP/Pages/AFL-20-38.aspx>
  - Healthcare facility guidance: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCQ/LCP/Pages/HealthCareFacilities.aspx>
- San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH): <https://www.sfdcp.org/covid19>
  - Testing requirements for facilities and providers: <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders.asp>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
  - Infection control and PPE guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/infection-control.html>
  - Updates on the novel coronavirus for healthcare professionals: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/index.html>
  - Interim Guidance for Healthcare Facilities: Preparing for Community Transmission of COVID-19 in the United States <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/guidance-hcf.html>
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)
  - See healthcare facility guidance: <https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/Emergency/EPRO/Current-Emergencies/Current-Emergencies-page>