



Shepherd Center

Shepherd Center FAQ on Patient Visitation Policy During COVID-19 Pandemic

April 3, 2020

Q: What is Shepherd Center's current policy on patient visitation?

A: Effective April 6, 2020, we are **temporarily** stopping all patient visitation and visitor access to the hospital due to the expected increases in the next several weeks in COVID-19 cases in Georgia and the United States. We are making an exception to allow visits by one parent (or other designated person) of patients who are age 18 and under. That one visitor cannot change during the patient's stay, and this person must stay in the hospital at all times.

Also, we will allow up to two designated family members/caregivers into the hospital to participate in family training as determined and scheduled by their treatment team. Additionally, up to two family members/caregivers can assist the patient when discharging.

In these few cases where family members are allowed into the hospital, they will have to be screened for COVID-19 and show a photo ID at our entryway checkpoints prior to entering. If the family members participating in family training and discharge leave and then travel back to Shepherd Center via public transportation (airplane, train or bus), they must self-quarantine for 72 hours before they will be allowed in the hospital. Also, they will need to have a copy of Shepherd Center's **family travel letter (attached)** in case they are stopped by government authorities enforcing shelter-in-place orders.

For newly admitted patients, one designated family member/caregiver can visit for up to two days (day of admission and the next weekday) to meet the treatment team, help get the patient situated in the room and become familiar with Shepherd Center's program.

Q: Why is Shepherd Center implementing these restrictions on visitors?

A: Georgia's governor and Atlanta's mayor have both issued shelter-in-place orders due to the widespread community transmission of COVID-19, and also because modeling predicts a significant increase in cases in the next two to three weeks. At Shepherd Center, we have no COVID-19 positive patients as of today, and we are working diligently to keep the virus from infecting patients and staff. We believe one of the best ways to do that is to suspend patient visitation for the time being.

Q: Why are Shepherd Center's visitation policy and other rules changing so often?

A: The COVID-19 pandemic in Georgia and the U.S. has continued to worsen. In response and

as more information becomes available, federal and state officials have changed their guidance to help mitigate the spread of the virus. As public health recommendations have evolved, Shepherd Center has changed its policies to align with the new guidance. Accordingly, we will reinstate patient visitation when conditions permit it.

Q: How will patients and their loved ones be able to stay in touch?

A: Shepherd Center will do all it can to facilitate virtual visits and provide regular treatment team communications through the use of HIPAA-compliant smartphone and tablet computer apps, such as FaceTime. If you need assistance, please speak to your case manager so we can address questions and needs.

Q: May family members visit their patient outside if physical distancing is maintained?

A: No, our no-visitation policy applies to indoor and outdoor spaces on Shepherd Center's campus.

Q: Will family members of patients 18 and under be allowed to stay in the patient's room?

A: If the one designated visitor of patients 18 and under chooses to stay in the patient's room, they must stay in the hospital during the patient's entire stay.

Q: What are the rules for patients' family members or caregivers staying in Shepherd Center's housing?

A: There are several key rules that family members or caregivers must follow if they are staying in Shepherd Center housing. They are:

- Family members may continue to stay in Shepherd Center housing for up to 30 days, even though they will not be allowed to visit their inpatient, except for the exceptions listed above. We will extend the 30 days, as our capacity allows.
- Housing residents cannot have other family members, friends or visitors in their apartments or common areas of Shepherd Center facilities.
- Inpatients are not allowed to go to Shepherd Center's on-campus housing.
- Limit group social activities to no more than 4 people. Also, stay 6 feet from each other when possible.
- Families ordering food deliveries to on-campus housing must meet the driver outside to pick up their order.
- Clean your apartment regularly with disinfectant, focusing on doorknobs, faucets and other surfaces.

Q: How will my patient's therapy and family training be affected by the change in visitation policy?

A: The change in Shepherd Center's visitation policy will not affect the quality of the patient's therapy sessions. However, some therapies may be handled via telehealth, when appropriate. Family training sessions will be scheduled, as needed, in person and supplemented by telehealth sessions and online learning modules both during the patient's stay and after discharge.

Q: Where can I find the latest policy updates, news and information from Shepherd Center?

A: We regularly post updates at shepherd.org/COVID19. Also, you can get news and helpful information on our online newsroom at news.shepherd.org and on our Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn pages.

Q: Where can I get more information online about Shepherd Center's programs, as well as spinal cord injury, brain injury and stroke?

A: Visit shepherd.org/video-tour to learn more about Shepherd Center's rehabilitation programs. Get educational information at these Shepherd Center websites:

- MyShepherdConnection.org
- BrainInjury101.org
- SpinalInjury101.org

Q: Where can patients' family members/caregivers get food while they are on the Shepherd Center campus?

A: There are several ways to buy food during your stay.

- Food delivery services may deliver individual food orders, but family members/caregivers must meet the delivery person outside to pick up their order.
- Shepherd Center's cafeteria will provide **daily free lunch and dinner to patients' family members staying in Shepherd housing**. They will be able to complete an order form in advance, and Shepherd staff will deliver the meals to the family members' apartments.
- The Fresh Market grocery store is two blocks north of Shepherd Center on Peachtree Road.
- CVS pharmacy is one block south of Shepherd Center on Peachtree Road and sells snacks and drinks.

Q: Where can patients' family members/caregivers get exercise while they are on campus?

A: Our fitness center and pool are closed to everyone except inpatients during the pandemic. But our lead exercise physiologist offers some tips for home exercise programs for people with disabilities, and many of them can apply to anyone. Visit news.shepherd.org to learn more.

Q: Where can family members access a computer and/or fax machine if they are staying in Shepherd Center housing?

A: Shepherd Center will provide a computer and fax machine in the Plaza level of the Woodruff Family Residence Center. Families are asked to disinfect with Shepherd-provided wipes after each use.



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April 3, 2020

To whom it may concern:

The holder of this letter has a family member being treated at Shepherd Center, Inc., 2020 Peachtree Rd. NW, Atlanta, GA 30309, which is a business operating within the Healthcare and Public Health Sector.

This family member is one of two individuals identified for family training at our Atlanta facility.

The holder of this letter is critical to the discharge preparation of our patient and as such, at times, must be physically present at our facility. The holder of this letter should be permitted to travel to and from Shepherd's facilities.

Thank you for your support and understanding.

Sincerely,

Sarah Morrison

Sarah Morrison
President and CEO
Shepherd Center, Inc.
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