Temporary restrictions to open family presence and visitation are in place at all Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) facilities, long term care (LTC) homes (including Affiliate organizations) and many other facilities. We thank you for your support and cooperation to contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus and keep everyone safe. The SHA is committed to returning to open family presence as soon as it is safe to do so, and will be continually assessing the impact of these restrictions.

We recognize how difficult this is for patients and families, but the decision to limit family presence is guided by the need to protect our patients, clients, residents and health care teams during COVID-19.

The following information applies to inpatients, outpatients, clients and residents in SHA facilities, long term care homes and affiliate organizations, personal care homes, and Ministry of Social Services Group Homes. Approaches to family presence/visitation may vary for each facility/home to reflect different considerations i.e. community spread of COVID-19, home/facility outbreak status, layout not supporting physical distancing, or availability of personal protective equipment (PPE). Pre-approval or scheduling of visits may be required. Please note: Personal Care Homes should also follow the Long-Term Care guidelines, where applicable.

**Family Member/Support Person Presence:**

**Indoor Family Presence:**

- Two family members or support persons can be identified to support patients/clients/residents.
- Only one family member/support person can be present in the home/facility at a time.
- Two family members or support people can be present at one time if physical distancing can be maintained (if from same family home, physical distancing does not apply) for:
  - Critical care/intensive care patients
  - End of life*/palliative care patients or residents
  - Maternal Services Units (Maternal and Postpartum Units, Neonatal Intensive Care Units, Pediatric Intensive Care Units, Pediatric Units)
- Additional family members or support persons may be identified for end of life, palliative and intensive/critical care.

* End of life care includes palliative care, hospice care or those who are at high risk for loss of life as determined with the patient, family, and care team. Examples may include but are not limited to; dramatic shift in functioning of patient; patient unlikely to leave hospital; score of 30% or less on the Palliative Performance Scale can be used as a general guideline when available but family presence should not be limited based on this guideline alone.

The patient/client/resident can determine who they would like to identify as their two family members/support people. This can include a loved one, friend, paid caregiver (eg. occupational/physical therapist), or other support person of the patient/client/resident’s choosing. The two designated family members are to stay consistent throughout the length of stay. This does not apply to end of life or critical care where multiple support people/family members can be designated. Other exceptions may be considered in consultation with the care team.

Children are welcome to be the second family member/support person for end of life/palliative and critical care patients when accompanied by an adult Family member. Please consult with the care team to discuss other visiting arrangements for children.

Religious/spiritual care providers (i.e. Clergy, Elder or Healer) do not need to be a designated family member/support person. Community religious/spiritual care workers are asked to call team members to coordinate a visit with patient or resident.
All community, foundation and other public and spiritual gatherings within the identified facilities and homes above remain on hold until further notice. Services provided by community volunteers who are 65 years of age or older, in non-essential service areas are also suspended.

Long Term Care (LTC) Outdoor Family Presence:

- Family members/support people can make arrangements with team members to have an outdoor visit.
- Outdoor visiting is encouraged if the purpose for the visit can be achieved outdoors and to allow visitation by more family members/support people.
- Outdoor visits can include more than the two designated family members/support people and more than one family members/support people can visit at a time.
- Family members/support people will maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from their loved one and are not permitted to pass any items to them. Items can be given to staff who will ensure proper infection prevention measures are followed.
- Masks are recommended for outdoor visits and will be required if the family member/support person has been to an area of concern in the last 14 days.

Family Member/Support Person Requirements:

- Identified family members and support people must be verified and undergo health screening prior to entering the facility, which may include a temperature check and questionnaire.
- You will be required to perform hand hygiene (hand washing and/or use of alcohol based hand rub) when entering and leaving the facility and when entering and leaving the patient/resident’s room.
- You will be provided a medical grade mask which you are required to wear, while inside the facility/home, and potentially additional personal protective equipment. Masks are recommended for outdoor visits.
- Family members and support people are not permitted to wait in waiting/family rooms or other common areas and are asked to limit movement within a site or in and out of the building.
- Family members and support people will maintain a physical distance of two metres from the patient and others unless providing personal care to the patient or resident.
- Family members/support people who regularly assisted with care (feeding, personal care, quality of life) prior to the pandemic will consult with the care team to return to the prior level of support.
- Family members and support people may be asked to limit the number who are in a site at one time. - Scheduling visits may be encouraged.
- If there is an outbreak in the facility or long term care home, guidelines for family presence may be impacted as per facility policies.
- NOTE: Patients and residents should NOT leave the care facility to visit family or friends or for any other reason unless this is an established outdoor visit. Patient day passes, essential appointments and access to healing centres will be determined in consultation with the care team.

Personal Items and Gifts

- Food and beverage, and other items must be packaged in a container which can be wiped down with disinfectant wipes upon entry into the facility/home.
- Hand hygiene must be performed.
- Make every effort to practice physical distancing when eating (maintain distance of 2 metres).
- Food made in a residential kitchen (ex: traditional foods) can be accepted if brought in a container that can
**Family Presence Information**

- easily be wiped down with disinfectant wipes upon entry into the facility/home.
  - A family member/support person can be identified to accompany a **certified service animal** if needed.

**Delivery** - Delivery in the form of flowers from a florist or dry paper (i.e., letters, photos, art work) is permitted. In some acute care settings such as Intensive Care Units (ICU), floral arrangements are not permitted due to possible pollen or plant allergens. Families will be asked to consult with managers or staff prior to placing orders for the delivery of any purchased floral arrangements and to follow existing scent-free policies. Please note that dry paper goods will be held for 24 hours before delivery to patients/clients/residents.

---

**Virtual Visiting**

Until we are able to safely allow all visitors back into our health care facilities, we encourage you to consider other ways to stay connected with your family members or friends, such as phone calls or online means of communication. We encourage you to consider virtual visiting through electronic applications such as FaceTime, Skype and WhatsApp.

We are working to support families with virtual visitation options, including making phones and iPads more accessible to patients/residents to assist with virtual visiting.

Thank you for your understanding and co-operation.

---

**When Restrictions to Family Presence is Needed:**

There may be situations in which Family Presence will need to be temporarily restricted to compassionate care reasons or even further restricted. These restrictions may occur because of an outbreak at the facility/home or due to a change in the community spread/epidemiology of COVID-19 as decided by the local Medical Health Officer.

During these times, compassionate care reasons may include, but are not limited to, family or support persons during end-of-life care, major surgery, intensive care/critical care, maternal/pediatrics, or a care partner aiding in clinical care (at the discretion of the patient's care provider). Please refer to **Compassionate Care Reasons for Family Presence** for more information.

---

**Questions or Concerns**

Please refer to the **Family Presence Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)** or the **Saskatchewan Health Authority Policy Directive: Family Presence during a Pandemic and supporting Appendices**.

If patients/residents or family member/support people have specific concerns that they would like further follow up, they can call their **local Quality of Care Coordinator**.

Health providers can also request a consult to support interpretation of the Family Presence Guidelines by emailing **pfcc@saskhealthauthority.ca**.