



June 5: COVID-19 Clinical Update

Visitor Policy, Patient Monitoring Program and Community Response to COVID-19

In today's COVID-19 Clinical Update, you will learn about updated visitor restrictions at Northwestern Memorial Hospital and how to refer all COVID-19 patients to the Patient Monitoring Program. Also, Community Affairs shares how it is collaborating with community partners to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

NMH VISITOR POLICY UPDATES

Starting at 10 am today, June 5, two visitors per patient are allowed for non-COVID-19 patients in Feinberg, Galter and Olson Pavilions at NMH, and Prentice Women's Hospital (Oncology and Antepartum/Postpartum Floors). New guidelines are as follows:

- Visitors are allowed between 10 am and 6 pm
- Visitors must be named in Epic, either during the registration process or by the patient's care team
- Visitors must be masked at all times

This new visitor policy will be implemented across all NM hospitals over the next several days, as local leaders evaluate facility and staff readiness to implement the change. Updates will be communicated locally and be posted on [NMI](#), [Physician Forum](#) and [nm.org](#).

For the continued safety of patients, physicians, staff and the community, current visitor restrictions remain at all other inpatient and outpatient care sites, including Emergency Departments. One visitor over age 18 is permitted for the following patients:

- Patients who require transportation home
- Labor and Delivery patients
- Patients with disabilities who require a reasonable accommodation for assistance related to an intellectual, developmental or cognitive disability

Surgical patients requiring inpatient admission should be dropped off for their surgery. Companions should leave the hospital during surgery. Once the patient is admitted, inpatient visitor restrictions apply.

PATIENT MONITORING PROGRAM

Starting Monday, June 8, patients who test positive for SARS-CoV-2 in the outpatient setting must be referred to the Patient Monitoring program using the new COVID-19 Positive Result BPA process described in this [tip sheet](#). Outpatients enrolled in the program should have symptoms

and be considered high-risk for COVID-19 complications (such as be over age 65, have chronic conditions, be immunocompromised or pregnant).

Patients who test positive in an NM hospital or ED will continue to be automatically enrolled. The Ambulatory Care Coordination Team will assume leadership of the Patient Monitoring Program and is supported by nurses from across the system. Please email Katie Doyle, director of NMPN Ambulatory Care Coordination, with questions or concerns at kdoyle@nm.org.

NM COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS ADDRESS MAJOR HEALTH NEEDS

NM works with a range of community partners that provide primary care and social services to residents who are most vulnerable. NM's [Community Partnership Model](#) was developed to leverage academic medical center resources in collaboration with community-based partners to address the highest priority health needs of patients and their families. You can learn more about these wide-reaching, longstanding partnerships in a [brief video](#) that was recently released.

We continue to make progress to address underlying social determinants of health that lead to health disparities, as outlined in our [Community Health Needs Assessment](#). The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the well-being of the most vulnerable communities. Factors that impact health and require immediate response include:

- Access to care, including the availability of PPE and testing
- Food insecurity
- Emergency housing
- Mental and behavioral health, and health education

Access to care: PPE and testing

Nationwide shortages of PPE, testing kits and supplies make it difficult for even large health systems with significant market leverage to obtain inventory. Community-based healthcare organizations have crisis-level shortages, and other partners that typically do not require PPE, like housing shelters, lack resources altogether. NM has provided emergency supplemental PPE to various health services agencies throughout Chicagoland to help them deliver care in a way that is safe for patients and clinicians.

Food insecurity

Food insecurity has worsened for those who already experience hunger, and there is an immediate need to feed the newly unemployed and children who no longer receive consistent, healthy meals at school. In response, NM provides emergency grants to partnering food pantries. Also, a portion of grocery store coupons donated by West Region employees as a part of the Season of Giving campaign supports a local program that promotes school readiness for low-income children from birth to five years old.

Members of the community who are homebound due to underlying health risks and who experience frequent food scarcity are also at high risk for hunger during this time. In the Central Region, NM has deployed MedSpeed, its internal courier resource, and Lyft to deliver food pantry items to clients' homes.

Emergency housing

The homeless are particularly vulnerable to contracting an infection during this pandemic and face challenges to recover in a safe place after they receive care. NM is working with the Chicago Homeless Coalition to provide testing to patients who are homeless, and has partnered with transitional housing shelters to secure beds for respite following hospitalization.

NM is also supporting the Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans by identifying hotels where staff can stay and has provided a grant to support their commissary, a free thrift store that stocks basic needs for low-income veterans and their families.

Mental and behavioral health services

Representatives from NM have collaborated with community leaders and members to share trusted health education and resources during this challenging time. Here are two examples of these partnerships:

- Behavioral Health Services Woodstock hosted a countywide Behavioral Health Summit to help local business owners support their employees during the pandemic.
- NM provided an emergency grant to upgrade technology and support remote access for Bright Star Community Outreach (BSCO), a faith-based community organization in Chicago's Bronzeville neighborhood that addresses social and environmental factors that contribute to health disparities. Improved technology enables BSCO to offer remote access to a variety of programs, including mental and behavioral health services, to its members who are homebound.

Finally, Community Affairs is also helping partners initiate post-COVID-19 stabilization and reactivation plans while maintaining safe practices. The pandemic is projected to have a long-term impact on vulnerable populations, and NM will continue to be a valuable resource to improve health in communities most in need.

Thank you for your extraordinary dedication and collaboration in providing exceptional care to our patients and supporting one another during this unprecedented crisis. If you have questions or would like to share the story of an NM hero, please email us at covid-19md@nm.org.



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