

MADISON COUNTY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL	
SUBJECT: Facial Coverings	POLICY #: IC-35
DEPARTMENT: Infection Control	PAGE: 1 of 4
REFERENCE: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services	APPROVED BY:
	DATE: 7/24/2023
	REVISED DATE

PURPOSE: To outline a standard protocol for the appropriate use of masks when indicated and allow for an opt-out mask use as applicable.

DEFINITIONS:

- A. Common area- refers to areas in a health care setting where patients are not treated, diagnosed, or examined.
- B. Employee- refers to any person under employment or contract of a health care setting, including health care practitioners, administrative staff, maintenance staff, aides, contractors, students, and volunteers.
- C. Patient- refers to a person receiving services from a health care practitioner or health care provider.
- D. Visitor- refers to any person in a health care setting who is not an employee or patient of the health care setting.
- E. Sterile areas- refers to locations where surgery is conducted or where procedures that require aseptic techniques are performed.
- F. Sterile procedure- refers to aseptic procedures with the goal of minimizing the risk of microbial contamination to reduce the rate of invasive or surgical site infection.
- G. Masks- Any cloth or surgical face mask, a face shield, or any other facial covering that covers the mouth and nose that is compliant with the MCMH’s current masking guidelines.

POLICY: Based on community risk factors, health conditions, presenting signs and symptoms and/or location within the hospital, Madison County Memorial Hospital may at times encourage or require the use of facial masks for patients, visitors, employees and/or contract staff in an effort to minimize negative health outcomes.

PROCEDURE:

- A. Patients. In the event that MCMH requires the use of masks, patients may be required to wear a mask while in common areas of the hospital if the patient is exhibiting signs or symptoms of or has a diagnosed infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission.

B. Visitors. In the event that MCMH requires the use of masks, visitors may be required to wear a mask if the visitor is:

1. Exhibiting signs or symptoms of or has a diagnosed infectious disease that can spread through droplet or airborne transmission;
2. In any sterile area within the hospital, including where surgeries or procedures that require aseptic technique are performed;
3. In an in-patient or clinical room with a patient who is exhibiting signs or symptoms of or has a diagnosed infectious disease that can spread through droplet or airborne transmission;
4. Visiting a patient whose treating health care provider has diagnosed the patient with or confirmed a condition affecting the immune system in a manner in which is known to increase the risk of transmission of an infection to the patient from others without signs or symptoms of infection and/or whose treating provider has determined that the use of a mask is necessary for the patient's safety; or
5. Requested by the patient to use a mask.

C. Employees & Contract Staff. In the event that MCMH requires the use of masks, employees and contract staff may be required to wear a mask consistent with hospital policies, procedures, and protocols and state and federal laws, rules, requirements and regulations. Employees will be required to wear an FDA certified medical/surgical mask or NIOSH-approved respirator if they are:

1. Conducting sterile procedures;
2. Working in a sterile area;
3. Working with a patient whose treating health care practitioner has diagnosed the patient with or confirmed a condition affecting the immune system in a manner which is known to increase risk of transmission of an infection from employees without signs or symptoms of infection to a patient and whose treating practitioner has determined that the use of facial coverings is necessary for the patient's safety;
4. With a patient on droplet or airborne isolation;
5. With a patient that has requested staff members to utilize a mask; or
6. Engaging in non-clinical potentially hazardous activities that require facial coverings to prevent physical injury or harm in accordance with industry standards.

D. Generally. MCMH reserves the right to require the use of masks in other circumstances consistent with national and state standards, and state and federal laws, rules, requirements, and regulations.

OPT-OUT OF MASKING PROCEDURES:

In the event that MCMH encourages or requires the use of masks, the patient, visitor, employee, and contract staff may opt-out from wearing masks as follows:

- A. If an alternative method of infection control is available, patients and visitors may opt-out of any existing mask requirements by making the opt-out request to a staff member, and such request will be reviewed by the Infection Control nurse or designee.
- B. Employees and contract staff may opt out of any mask requirements by notifying Employee Health and such request will be reviewed by the Infection Control nurse or designee.

EXCLUSIONS FROM THE OPT-OUT PROCEDURES:

In the event that MCMH requires the use of masks, the following exclusions shall apply to the opt-out provisions:

- A. If there are no alternative methods of infection control or infectious disease prevention, a patient **may not** opt-out of any mask requirements in the following circumstances:
 - 1. A patient has been diagnosed or is exhibiting signs or symptoms of an infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission;
 - 2. Opting-out has been identified by a provider as being medically or programmatically contraindicated for medical, safety or programmatic issues; or
 - 3. Opting-out would otherwise infringe on the rights and would risk the safety or health of other patients, individuals, or employees of the hospital.
- B. If there are no alternative methods of infection control or infectious disease prevention, a visitor **may not** opt-out of any mask requirements in the following circumstances:
 - 1. The visitor has been diagnosed or is exhibiting signs or symptoms of an infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission;
 - 2. Opting-out would otherwise infringe on the rights and would risk the safety or health of other patients, individuals, or staff of the hospital;
 - 3. The patient has requested visitors utilize a mask; or
 - 4. There are no alternative methods of infection control or infectious disease prevention.
- C. Employees or Contract Staff of MCMH **may not** opt-out of any mask requirements if the employee or contract staff member is:
 - 1. Conducting a sterile procedure, including aseptic procedures or surgeries, that call for practices that minimize the risk of microbial contamination to reduce the rate of invasive or surgical site infection;
 - 2. Caring for a patient or being present while sterile procedures are being performed, including aseptic procedures or surgeries;
 - 3. Working in a sterile area within the hospital, including where surgeries or procedures that require aseptic technique are performed;
 - 4. With a patient who is on droplet or airborne precautions;
 - 5. Working with a patient whose treating health care provider has diagnosed the patient with or confirmed a condition affecting the immune system in a manner which is known to increase the risk of transmission of an infection to the patient from others without signs or symptoms of infection and/or whose treating provider has determined that the use of a mask is necessary for the patient's safety;

6. Requested by the patient to utilize a mask in the presence of the patient; or
7. Engaging in potentially hazardous activities that require a mask to prevent infection, injury or harm in accordance with national, state, and industry standards, and state and federal laws, rules, requirements and regulations.

D. MCMH reserves the right to consider other exclusions from the opt-out provisions in order to comply with applicable state and federal laws, rules, requirements and regulations.

COMMUNICATION/EDUCATION:

In the event that MCMH requires the use of masks, the hospital will communicate such requirement and the standards and protocols herein will be made generally available to the affected persons.

In the event that the Florida Department of Health and The Agency for Health Care Administration revises the final rule regarding the use of facial coverings in health care settings, this policy shall terminate immediately, and a revised policy shall be distributed to the workforce and made public as soon as reasonably practicable.