

August 24, 2020

Dear Health Centre Visitor

**SUBJECT: Visitors and Use of Non-Medical Masks**

The presence of family and caregivers is integral to the healing and overall health and well-being of patients in hospitals and health centres across Manitoba. As COVID-19 is expected to be a part of our 'new normal', efforts are underway to find a longer-term balance between preventing the spread of this virus and ensuring we are able to ensure safe interaction between patients and their loved ones.

**As we approach respiratory illness season, all health-care facilities in Manitoba are preparing to implement a requirement that all visitors wear non-medical masks for the duration of their visit(s).** This requirement will take effect September 1, 2020 and will apply to all who visit health-care facilities, **designated support persons, general visitors, tradespeople and vendors, and outpatients** attending medical appointments.

With the exception of specific exemptions made on a case-by-case basis, visitors who are not wearing a mask will not be admitted.

**Note:** At health care facilities within the Prairie Mountain Health Region, masks are mandatory effective August 24, 2020 as a result of the region's ORANGE Pandemic Response Level.

Visitors are asked to provide and wear their own mask. Cloth and other non-medical masks are acceptable and readily available in most communities. In situations where a designated support person does not have access to a mask (due to an emergency or equity-related situation) the facility will provide a mask to be worn.

Medical masks will only be provided where the circumstances of the visitor and/or the patient require their use. Refer to: COVID-19 Inpatient Visitation Principles: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-inpatient-visit-principles.pdf>.

We will continue to assess the impact and need for additional measures as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves and remain thankful for the cooperation and understanding of family members as we take every measure to protect you, your loved one(s) and our staff.