



## POLICY

**TITLE: Appropriate Use of Facial Coverings for Infection Control**

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** February 2024

**OWNER OF THIS DOCUMENT:** VP Quality, Safety, and Experience

**SCOPE:** The document applies to all Baptist Health Care (BHC) wholly owned facilities.

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:** To provide standards for the appropriate use of Facial Coverings for patients, visitors, and Workforce Members.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Common Area:** Refers to indoor areas in a BHC clinical facility where patients are not treated, diagnosed, or examined. Examples of a Common Area are hallways, lobbies, waiting rooms, the cafeteria, etc.

**Facial Covering:** A cloth or surgical face mask, a face shield, or any other facial covering that covers the mouth and nose.

**Practitioner:** An individual who has been granted clinical privileges and/or Medical Staff appointment by the Board, including, but not limited to, members of the Medical Staff, Licensed Independent Practitioners, and Advanced Practice Professionals.

**Sterile Areas:** Refers to locations where surgery is conducted or where procedures that require aseptic techniques are performed.

**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.

**Team Members:** Full, part time, contract, and PRN employees of BHC.

**Transmissible Disease:** Illnesses that result from the infection, presence, and growth of pathogenic (capable of causing disease) biologic agents in an individual human or other animal host.

**Workforce Members:** Team Members, members of BHC subsidiaries' medical staffs and allied health staffs (whether employed or independent), volunteers, students, and any employees or agents of independent contractors of BHC or its subsidiaries who are carrying out BHC business operations on BHC's behalf under the general direction of a Team Member.

**POLICY:**

1. Patients: BHC may require a patient in a Common Area to wear a Facial Covering only if the patient is exhibiting signs or symptoms of or has a diagnosed Transmissible Disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission.
2. Visitors: BHC may choose to require a visitor in a Common Area to wear a Facial Covering only when the visitor is:
  - a. Exhibiting signs or symptoms of or has a diagnosed Transmissible Disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission,
  - b. In Sterile Areas or an area where Sterile Procedures are being performed,
  - c. In a patient room or other clinical area with a patient who is exhibiting signs or symptoms of or has a diagnosed Transmissible Disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission, or
  - d. Visiting a patient whose treating 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 Workforce Members 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.
3. Opt-out procedures: In the event that BHC requires the use of Facial Coverings at any of its locations, visitors, patients, and/or Workforce Members may opt-out from wearing the Facial Covering only under the following circumstances:
  - a. Patients may opt not to wear a Facial Covering provided there are alternative means for infection control. Alternative methods may include a private room with the door closed. Patients will be provided the same respect, level of medical care, and information as any other Patient at a BHC facility pursuant to the Florida Patient Bill of Rights and Responsibilities, Fla. Stat. 381.026.
  - b. Visitors may opt-out of any mask requirements by notifying a Workforce Member, and the request will be reviewed by applying the hospital's infection control procedures to determine if an alternative method of infection control or infectious disease prevention is available. Alternative methods may include remote telephone or video visitation or a private waiting room with the door closed, if available.
  - c. Workforce Members may opt out of Facial Covering requirements unless the Workforce Member is:
    - i. Conducting Sterile Procedures.
    - ii. Working in a Sterile Area.
    - iii. Working with a Patient whose treating 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 Workforce Members 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.
    - iv. With a patient on droplet or airborne isolation; or
    - v. Engaging in non-clinical potentially hazardous activities that require Facial Coverings to prevent physical injury or harm in accordance with industry standards.



REFERENCES/SOURCES:

Florida Statutes 408.824

Florida Statutes 381.026

Florida Administrative Code 59AER23

RESCISSION: New Document