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| **Appropriate Use of Facial Coverings for Infection ControlA green and white logo  Description automatically generated** |
| *Date Implemented:* | 07.13.23 | *Date Reviewed/ Revised:* |  | *Reviewed/ Revised By:* |  |

**Policy:**

This facility will follow rule 59AER23-2 Standards for the Appropriate Use of Facial Coverings for Infection Control. This can be conducted through different means based on the facility’s structure and residents’ needs. Exceptions will be in accordance with federal, state and/or local guidance.

**Policy Explanation and Compliance Guidelines:**

1. The Infection Preventionist or designee will monitor the infection control status of the facility and ensure that appropriate masking and opt-out options are in effect.
2. The core principles of appropriate masking guidelines are as follows:

a. Health care practitioners and health care providers may choose to require a patient to wear a facial covering only when the patient is in a common area of the health care setting and is exhibiting signs or symptoms of or has a diagnosed infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission.

b. Health care practitioners and health care providers may choose to require a visitor to wear a facial covering only when the visitor is:

1. Exhibiting signs or symptoms of or has a diagnosed infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission,
2. In sterile areas of the health care setting or an area where sterile procedures are being 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 be spread through droplet or airborne transmission, or
4. Visiting 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.

3. Opt-Out Requirements are as follows:

a. Pursuant to 59AER23-2(1), health care practitioners and health care providers who choose to require facial covering for any patient must include in the policy a provision for the opting-out of wearing a facial covering. Such policy must be in accordance with the Florida Patient Bill of Rights and Responsibilities, section 381.026, F.S.

b. Pursuant to 59AER23-2(2), health care practitioners and health care providers who choose to require a facial covering for any visitor must include in the policy a provision for the opting-out of wearing a facial covering if an alternative method of infection control or infectious disease prevention is available.

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4. Health care practitioners and health care providers must allow an employee to opt out of facial

 covering requirements unless an employee is:

a. Conducting sterile procedures,

b. Working in a sterile area,

c. 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,

d. With a patient on droplet or airborne isolation, or

e. Engaging in non-clinical potentially hazardous activities that require facial coverings to prevent physical injury or harm in accordance with industry standards.

5. Health care practitioners and health care providers must allow a resident to opt out of facial

 Covering requirements pursuant to Florida Patient Bill of Rights and responsibilities as follows:

 a. The individual dignity of a patient must be respected at all times and upon all occasions.

 b. A patient has a right to refuse any treatment. The provider shall document any such refusal.

 c. The facility shall provide education to the patient regarding the indications for mask use,

 if the patient refuses to wear the mask as indicated for safety and infection control purposes,

 the staff will document the refusal and continue to provide education and care in the safest

 manner possible while respecting the patient’s rights.

6. Health Care practitioners and health care providers must allow a visitor to opt out of facial

 coverings if an alternative method of infection control and infectious disease prevention is

 available. Education to the visitor will be provided as well as other acceptable infection

 prevention and control methods. If none are available, the visitor will be highly encouraged to

 wear the mask or encouraged to attempt other forms of visitation until such time as the patient is

 cleared from isolation or the threat has resolved.