



Effective 7/27/2023

POLICY

Avow and all Avow company subsidiaries will follow the requirements of 59AER23-2, Standards for the Appropriate Use of Facial Coverings for Infection Control. Avow staff members who are ill should not report to work and should instead contact their supervisor for further instruction.

PURPOSE

This policy describes requirements for wearing of facial coverings for staff, volunteers, patients and visitors. It also includes opt out provisions.

PROCEDURE

Visitors

When necessary for patient, visitor, and/or employee health and safety, visitors to Avow can be required to wear a facial covering such as a mask. Avow may require a facial covering in specific situations which include any of the following:

1. the visitor is exhibiting signs or symptoms of or has a diagnosed infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission,
2. the visitor is in a sterile area of the health care setting or an area where sterile procedures are being performed,
3. the visitor is 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. the visitor is 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.

Visitor masking is only required in the patient room or care setting.

Avow allows visitors to opt-out of masking if an alternative method of infection control or infectious diseases prevention is available.

1. Opt-out will be evaluated on an individual basis to determine if an alternative method of infection control or infectious disease prevention is available.
2. Anyone requesting an opt out must request either in writing or verbally to an Avow Clinical Manager.
3. The manager will evaluate if there is an alternative method of infection control or infectious disease prevention available.



Patients

Avow may require a patient to wear a facial covering such as a mask 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.

Employee

When a mask is needed in the course of work, Avow employees may request to opt out of wearing a facial covering unless one or more of the following apply. They are:

1. conducting sterile procedures,
2. working in a sterile area,
3. working with a patient with a compromised immune system,
4. with a patient on droplet or airborne isolation,
5. 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,
6. Additionally, Avow employees engaging in non-clinical potentially hazardous activities that require facial coverings to prevent physical injury or harm in accordance with industry standards will be required to wear a facial covering.

Facial covering opt out will be evaluated on an individual basis to determine if an alternative method of infection control or infectious disease prevention is available. Staff members requesting opt out must see their manager and request the opt out in writing. Leadership will determine if there is an alternative method of infection control or infectious disease prevention available.

REFERENCES

1. Rulemaking Authority 408.824 FS. Law Implemented 408.824 FS. History – New 6-30-23.

DEFINITIONS

1. "Common area" refers to areas in a health care setting where patients are not treated, diagnosed, or examined.
2. "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.
3. "Health care setting" refers to any place where health care practitioners and/or health care providers practice their profession or provide services.
4. "Patient" refers to a person receiving services from a health care practitioner or health care provider.
5. "Sterile areas" refers to locations where surgery is conducted or where procedures that require aseptic techniques are performed.
6. "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.
7. "Visitor" refers to any person in a health care setting who is not an employee or patient of the health care setting.