



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs
VA Caribbean Healthcare System

Media Advisory
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Updated visitation policy at VA Caribbean Healthcare System

Subject to change due to weather conditions

SEPTEMBER 17, 2022, SAN JUAN, P.R. —The health and safety of our patients, visitors, employees, and communities remain a top priority at VA Caribbean Healthcare System (VACHS). Therefore, due to the Tropical Storm Fiona, VACHS is announcing the temporary closure and changes of the following clinics and visitation hours:

Mayagüez: Closed on Monday, September 19, 2022. Back to normal operations on Tuesday, September 20, 2022.

All other outpatient clinics: Expected to be on normal operations on Monday, September 19, 2022.

San Juan: Visitation hours are canceled -except for Compassionate Care visits- starting tomorrow, Sunday, September 18, 2022. Back to normal operations on Monday, September 19, 2022.

Visitation Policy:

Hours of visitation: **1:00 pm to 6:00 pm starting on Monday**

Duration of visitation: **30 minutes**

Instructions for visitors:

- Rooms with **one** patient: Two visitors per patient are permitted during the visitation period.
- Rooms with **two** patients: One visitor for one patient is permitted during the visitation period.
- Temporary visitation exceptions may be granted for patients and visitors in extenuating circumstances, such as imminent end-of-life and/or a specific patient needing extra support. For example, particular patients needing additional support include those with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities or other cognitive impairments.
- Visitors must undergo temperature and symptom screening upon arrival at VACHS checkpoints, perform hand hygiene and *always wear a surgical mask*. Please, be incredibly attentive to wearing a mask over your nose and mouth and correctly wearing other personal protective equipment as directed by Hospital staff.
- If visitors do not pass the screening process or follow Hospital protocols, they will not be allowed to visit.
- Visitors who are sick will not be permitted to enter VACHS; this is without exception.
- Visitors must remain at the patient's bedside throughout their visit unless directed by the clinical team to step out of the room or limit visitation and/or for infection control reasons.
- We encourage visitors to remain closely connected to their loved ones via digital devices and/or phone. Staff will assist patients if needed and/or provide a hospital-approved device.
- Visitors should be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.
- Unvaccinated visitor(s) must present a negative COVID-19 PCR test within 72 hours before the visit or a negative Antigen test within 24 hours before the visit. Symptomatic visitors are not allowed to enter the hospital.
- Food or drinks in patients' rooms are not allowed.
- Relatives of patients admitted to the Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Unit, Acute Behavioral Health Intensive Care Unit (ABHICU), and Community Living Centers (CLC) will be contacted by clinical staff and provided instructions on their visitation policies.

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ABOUT VACHS

VA Caribbean Healthcare System is one of the leading healthcare systems serving Veterans in the United States and its territories. We provide healthcare services at 11 locations, serving Puerto Rico (PR) & the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI). Facilities include our San Juan VA Medical Center & ten community-based outpatient clinics: 8 PR clinics in Arecibo, Pueblo Ward, Comerío, San Juan, Guayama, Mayagüez, Utuado, & Vieques; & in St. Croix & St. Thomas, in the USVI. Furthermore, we train America's future healthcare providers & conduct crucial medical research. For more information, visit www.va.gov/caribbean-health-care/