

# Appropriate Use of Facial Coverings for Infection Control – N

## Replacing the Heaton Policy: Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) – Source Control - R

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### Policy Statement

In accordance with the Florida Statutes §408.824 and the standards set forth in the Florida Administrative Code 59AER23-1 and -2, the Good Samaritan Center has adopted the following policy regarding the use of facial coverings for infection control by its residents, visitors, staff members and others coming into the facility.

### Definitions

Common Area – refers to areas in a health care setting where patients are not treated, diagnosed, or examined.

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.

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

Patient – refers to a person receiving services from a health care practitioner or health care provider. (For the purposes of this policy, the term "residents" is used to indicate persons residing in the Good Samaritan Center skilled nursing and long-term care facility.)

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

Visitor – refers to any person in a health care setting who is not an employee or patient (resident) of the health care setting.

### Policy Interpretation and Implementation

1. The Good Samaritan Center does not require the universal use of facial coverings by persons in order to gain access to, entry upon, service from, or admission to the facility or otherwise discriminate against persons based on their refusal to wear a facial covering.
2. Persons who freely choose to wear facial coverings while within the Good Samaritan Center facility may do so based upon their personal preference.
3. Facial coverings remain an important intervention in preventing respiratory bacterial and viral transmission. The Good Samaritan Center and its health care practitioners may choose to require a resident to wear a facial covering only when the resident is in a common area of the facility and is exhibiting signs or symptoms of or has been diagnosed as having an infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission.
4. The Good Samaritan Center and its health care practitioners may choose to require a visitor to wear a facial covering only when the visitor is:

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- a. exhibiting signs or symptoms of or has a diagnosed infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission;
- b. in sterile areas of the facility or an area where sterile procedures are being performed;
- c. in a resident or clinical room with a resident who is exhibiting signs or symptoms of or has a diagnosed infectious disease that can be spread through droplet or airborne transmission; or
- d. visiting a resident 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 to the resident's safety.

**Opt-out Requirements of 59AER23-2 when facial coverings are being required.**

1. The Good Samaritan Center will follow the regulations of 59AER23-2 for persons requesting to opt-out of wearing a facial covering. Alternatives for visitation while opting-out of wearing face coverings will involve input from the administrator, infection preventionist nurse, director of nursing and/or the health care practitioner. The alternative to an in person visit while wearing a facial covering must be one that provides for appropriate infection control or infectious disease prevention and is tailored to the individual situation providing for the protection of all concerned. It may be possible, for instance, that some visits without required face coverings may be arranged:
  - a. via telephone, FaceTime or other electronic media;
  - b. to take place in outdoor spaces where disease transmission may be less likely; or
  - c. in an indoor setting with social distancing via a Plexiglas barrier separating the resident from the visitor(s).
2. Good Samaritan Center and its health care practitioners who choose to require a facial covering for any resident will provide for the opting-out of wearing a facial covering that is in accordance with the Florida Patient Bill of Rights and Responsibilities, section 381.026, F.S. Some of the pertinent rights included in the Florida Patient's Bill of Rights and Responsibilities include the following:
  - a. *381.026 (5) Responsibilities Of Patients.—Each patient of a health care provider or health care facility shall respect the health care provider's and health care facility's right to expect behavior on the part of patients which, considering the nature of their illness, is reasonable and responsible.*
  - b. *381.026 (4) Rights of Patients 3.* A patient has the right to be given by his or her health care provider information concerning diagnosis, planned course of treatment, alternatives, risks, and prognosis, unless it is medically inadvisable or impossible to give this information to the patient, in which case the information must be given to the patient's guardian or a person designated as the patient's representative. A patient has the right to refuse this information.
  - c. *381.026 (4) Rights of Patients 4.* A patient has the right to refuse any treatment based on information required by this paragraph, except as otherwise provided by law. The responsible provider shall document any such refusal.
  - d. *381.026 (4) Rights of Patients 5.* A patient in a health care facility has the right to know what facility rules and regulations apply to patient conduct.

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3. Good Samaritan Center and its health care practitioners who choose to require a facial covering for any visitor will provide for the opting-out of wearing a facial covering when requested by the visitor if an alternative method of infection control or infectious disease prevention is available based upon the individual resident’s and visitor’s circumstance.
  
4. As a health care provider, the Good Samaritan Center will 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.

<b>References</b>	
<b>OBRA Regulatory Reference Numbers</b>	§483.80 Infection Control
<b>Survey Tag Numbers</b>	F880
<b>Other References</b>	Florida Administrative Code 59AER23-2 Standards for the Appropriate Use of Facial Coverings for Infection Control Florida Statutes §408.824 State of Florida SB 252
<b>Related Documents</b>	Replaces Heaton COVID-19 policy on Source Control
<b>Version</b>	Good Samaritan Center Policy