



<b>Policy:</b>	Observer (Medical and Non-Medical)	
<b>Owner of Policy:</b>	Integrated Director, Medical Affairs	
<b>SLT Sponsor:</b>	Integrated Vice President, Medical and Academic Affairs	
<b>Approval By:</b>	Medical Advisory Committee	<b>Date:</b> 2021-09-30
<b>Original Effective Date:</b> 2008-12-01	<b>Reviewed Date(s):</b> 2021-09-30	<b>Revised Date(s):</b> 2021-09-30

<p><b>This policy applies to:</b> or</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> St. Joseph's Health Care London <input type="checkbox"/> Mount Hope Centre for Long-Term Care <input type="checkbox"/> Parkwood Institute Main Building <input type="checkbox"/> Parkwood Institute Mental Health Care Building <input type="checkbox"/> St. Joseph's Hospital <input type="checkbox"/> Southwest Centre for Forensic Mental Health Care
<p><b>(If this policy applies to all sites, please check St. Joseph's Health Care London only.)</b></p>	

<p><b>There is a similar/same policy at LHSC:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><b>If yes, Policy Type:</b> Corporate</p> <p><b>Policy Name:</b> Observer Policy (Medical and Non-Medical)</p> <p><b>Policy Owner:</b> Director, Medical Affairs</p>
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**POLICY**

St Joseph's Health Care London (St. Joseph's) is committed to teaching and to offering learning experiences to individuals who are not staff or [affiliates](#) of St. Joseph's. These individuals, called [Observers](#) are offered an opportunity to attend at the organization to gain knowledge and expertise about health care and/or the functioning of the organization. This may involve the opportunity to observe specific procedures and/or patient care processes.

**Approval of Observership**

Approval from the relevant Department Chief, Division Chief, Site Chief, Director, Coordinator must be obtained prior to agreeing to the presence of the Observer, and the individual approving the Observership must consider whether the Observership is consistent with and based on:

- The mission and values of the organization
- Ensuring the safety of, the patient (if the patient is capable with respect to the treatment) or the patient's [Substitute Decision Maker \(SDM\)](#) if the patient is incapable with respect to the treatment (hereafter referred to as patient/SDM)
- Respecting and maintaining the privacy of the patient and their family
- Protecting the confidentiality of patient information and confidential business information of the organization

**Observer Role**

An Observer is **not** permitted, in any circumstances, to provide any patient care. This prohibition includes but is **not limited to:**

- Taking a medical history
- Conducting physical examinations
- Diagnosing or treating patient's condition
- Ordering, preparing or administering drugs
- Documenting on patients' health records, either in electronic or hard copy format
- Having independent access to health records, either in electronic or hard copy format
- Performing or assisting in surgical procedures, or diagnostic patient interventions
- Obtaining consent

- Interacting directly with patient/SDM
- Providing health care advice

### **Observer Contact with Patients**

If it is anticipated that the Observer will be present during any contact with a patient/SDM, the [Sponsor](#) must:

- Request verbal consent from the patient/SDM to allow the Observer to be present at the time of the clinical visit, procedure or other patient service
- Introduce the Observer to the patient/SDM and explain the reason for the observership
- Document patient/SDM consent in the patient's health record

### **Duration of Observership**

Attendance by an Observer should not exceed twelve (12) weeks unless an extended period is deemed necessary by the Department Chief (or Division Chief), Sponsor and the Observer. Reapplication is required if the observership is longer than 12 months.

An Observer is not considered an employee or affiliate of St. Joseph's and therefore is not:

- Entitled to salary, benefits, reimbursement of expenses or other forms of compensation
- Covered under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB)
- Covered under the organization's liability insurance
- Entitled to receive educational credit or certification from the organization for time spent observing
- Entitled access to Occupational Health Services

Custom tours for researchers, scientists, physicians, hospital administrators and staff from other hospitals, health care agencies and government have a Sponsor who must comply with the procedure and rules as outlined below. Any request for a custom tour involving more than one program must ensure that all programs are notified prior to the agreed upon tour date.

St. Joseph's may terminate an Observership at any time at its sole discretion. Concerns regarding the appropriateness of the Observer will be addressed by the Sponsor and, if necessary, by the Sponsoring department/program chief/leader. Concerns regarding the appropriateness of an Observer in Perioperative Care will be dealt with by the Coordinator, Perioperative Services, the Chief of Surgery, and the Chief of Anesthesia.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **1. At least two weeks prior to the Observership:**

- 1.1. Responsibilities of Sponsor:
  - 1.1.1. Provide Observer with [documentation package](#) (refer to Appendices) to complete and submit to the Sponsor at least two weeks prior to the planned attendance of the Observer.
  - 1.1.2. Review completed documentation submitted by Observer to ensure that information provided is complete, forms signed and the request for Observership is compliant with this policy.
  - 1.1.3. Forward the completed and signed documentation to the appropriate leaders (i.e., Department Chief, Division Chief, Site Chief, Clinical Director, Coordinator of the program where the Observer will be sited if the Observer is not a physician or dentist) for their review and approval/support.
  - 1.1.4. Once approved/supported by appropriate leaders, submit all required documentation, one week prior to start date, to:
    - a. Medical Affairs, if the Observer's Sponsor is a physician or dentist
    - b. Relevant Leader if the Observer's Sponsor is not a physician or dentist
- 1.2. Responsibilities of Observer:
  - 1.2.1. Review the documentation
  - 1.2.2. Complete and sign
    - a. [Observer Request Form](#) (Appendix A)
    - b. [Observer Confidentiality Agreement](#) (Appendix B)
    - c. [Medical and Non-Medical Observers Self Screening Health Evaluation](#) (Appendix C)
    - d. [Infection Prevention and Core Competency Training](#) (Appendix D)
  - 1.2.3. Forward all documentation requirements to the Sponsor at least one week prior to the requested date of attendance.
- 1.3. Responsibilities of Department Chief, Division Chief, Site Chief, Director, Coordinator:
  - 1.3.1. Review the Observer's completed documentation and provide support/approval for the Observership, or decline the Observer's request if the request is not consistent with this policy.
- 1.4. Responsibilities of Medical Affairs, Coordinator:

- 1.4.1. Notify relevant leader(s) and/or staff members for all departments/programs/services/area of which the Observer will be attending by identifying the Observer's name and Sponsor (e.g. inform the Coordinator, Perioperative Services if the Observer will be in the OR).
- 1.4.2. Retain all Observer documentation for a minimum of six (6) years after the completion of the Observership.

## 2. On the Observer's arrival date:

- 2.1. Responsibilities of Sponsor
  - 2.1.1. Validate the Observer's photo identification (e.g. Passport photo, valid Driver's License), where applicable.
  - 2.1.2. Ensure receipt of any outstanding documentation information, i.e. credentialing or certification requirements are obtained, if necessary.
  - 2.1.3. Facilitate Observer obtaining a St. Joseph's visitor badge by signing-out one of the generic/visitor badges in the Security office where the Observership is affiliated, where applicable.
    - a. Sponsor must sign-out the ID badge and is responsible for returning the ID badge when the Observership ends.
    - b. If an Observer has a valid photo ID from another health care organization (or educational institutional badge), they must wear this ID while on St. Joseph's premises.
  - 2.1.4. Provide orientation to the Observer, including:
    - a. Overview of observing events and times
    - b. Physical layout of department/program/service area
    - c. Safety training, including use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), as applicable
    - d. Any applicable departmental policies or procedures
  - 2.1.5. Ensure that the Observer is under the responsibility of a St. Joseph's staff or affiliate at all times.
- 2.2. Responsibilities of Observer:
  - 2.2.1. Wear ID badge at all times and PPE when appropriate while in the organization (or recognized educational/organizational ID).
  - 2.2.2. Respect that unforeseen events may interfere with the Observership, and in this case, the Observer will recognize that their Observership may be terminated at the request of the Sponsor, other leaders in the department or the organization.

## 3. Completion of the Observership (last day):

- 3.1. Responsibilities of the Sponsor:
  - 3.1.1. Ensure that the St. Joseph's visitor badge is returned upon completion of Observership.
  - 3.1.2. Where desired, obtain feedback/evaluation from the Observer regarding their overall experience to ensure on-going positive relations and quality assurance.

## DEFINITIONS

**Affiliates** – Individuals who are not employed by the organization but perform specific tasks at or for the organization, including appointed professionals (e.g., physicians, dentists), students, volunteers, researchers, contractors or contracted staff who may be members of a third-party contract or under direct contract to the organization and individuals working at the organization but funded through an external source, (e.g. research employees funded by Western).

**Observer** – An individual attending at the organization for the specific purpose of gaining knowledge and expertise about health care and/or the functioning of the organization. An Observer may be:

- Medical professionals from other hospitals
- Nursing professionals from other hospitals
- Allied Health professionals from other hospitals
- Other individuals not affiliated with the organization

The individuals below are **not considered Observers** and are managed through alternative processes/policies. Please refer to the appropriate department/policy for information about having such individuals attend at St. Joseph's.

- Student, resident, fellow or research fellow who is completing an education placement at the organization as part of a program offered by an educational institution affiliated with the organization.
- [Volunteer](#)
- [Employee of St. Joseph's](#)
- [Pharmaceutical Representative](#)
- [Industry Representative](#)

**Sponsor** – A St. Joseph's Health Care London staff or a physician or dentist who is credentialed at St. Joseph's Health Care London.

**Substitute Decision-Maker (SDM)** – As defined by the [Health Care Consent Act, 1996 \(HCCA\)](#) is a person who is authorized to give or refuse consent to a treatment on behalf of a person who is incapable. The SDM must be capable, willing and available. The SDM must make a decision that is consistent with the patient/client/resident's previously expressed wishes and values. In the absence of previously expressed wishes the SDM must follow the principle of best interest. If a person is incapable with respect to a treatment, consent may be given or refused on their behalf by a person described in one of the following:

1. The incapable person's guardian of the person, if the guardian has authority to give or refuse consent to the treatment.
2. The incapable person's attorney for personal care, if the power of attorney confers authority to give or refuse consent to the treatment.
3. The incapable person's representative appointed by the Board under section 33, if the representative has authority to give or refuse consent to the treatment.
4. The incapable person's spouse or partner.
5. A child or parent of the incapable person, or a children's aid society or other person who is lawfully entitled to give or refuse consent to the treatment in the place of the parent. This paragraph does not include a parent who has only a right of access. If a children's aid society or other person is lawfully entitled to give or refuse consent to the treatment in the place of the parent, this paragraph does not include the parent.
6. A parent of the incapable person who has only a right of access.
7. A brother or sister of the incapable person.
8. Any other relative of the incapable person.
9. If two or more persons who are described above and who meet the requirements disagree about whether to give or refuse consent, and if their claims rank ahead of all others, the Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) shall make the decision in their stead.
10. If no person described above meets the requirements, the PGT shall make the decision.

## REFERENCES

### Related Corporate Policies

[Civility in the Workplace](#)

[Consent to Photography, Videography and/or Sound Recording](#)

[Industry Representatives](#)

[Workplace Violence Prevention](#)

### Legislation

Government of Ontario (1996) [Health Care Consent Act, 1996](#)

### Other Resources

St. Joseph's [Human Resources \(HR\)](#)

St. Joseph's Pharmacy Services [Guidelines for Pharmaceutical Representatives](#)

St. Joseph's [Volunteer Services](#)

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

Medical Affairs (2018) [St. Joseph's Observer Request Form](#) (Rev. 2018-10-10)

### Appendix B

Medical Affairs (2009) [St. Joseph's Observer Confidentiality Agreement](#) (Rev. 2009-11)

### Appendix C

Medical Affairs (2021) [St. Joseph's Medical and Non-Medical Self-Screening Health Evaluation](#) (Rev. 2021-09-08)

### Appendix D

Medical Affairs (2020) [Infection Prevention and Control Core Competency Training](#) (Rev. 2020-11)