

VISITORS - RIGHT TO SEE

THE LAW

Each patient shall... "Be permitted to **see visitors each day.**"

§ 51.61(1)(t), Wis. Stats. [Emphasis added.]

"(1) Each **inpatient** shall be permitted to **see visitors each day**, as authorized by s. 51.61(1)(t), Stats., and in accordance with this section.

(2) Adequate and **reasonably private space** shall be provided to accommodate visitors **so that severe time limits need not be set** on a visit.

(3) Every visitor who arrives during **normal visiting hours** shall be permitted to see the patient **unless the patient refuses** to see the visitor.

(4) The treatment facility may require **prior identification of potential visitors** and **may search visitors** but only when there are **documented security reasons** for screening or searching visitors.

(5) Visits **may not be limited to less than one hour**, except under documented special circumstances." DHS 94.21, Wis. Admin. Code [Emphasis added.]

[NOTE: This right may be denied for cause under Sec. 51.61(2), Stats. See section on Client Rights Limitations or Denials (CRLDs) in this Digest.]

DECISIONS

1. A father filed a complaint about **restrictions on his visiting with his son**, who was in treatment foster care. The county had imposed limitations on his visits with his son as part of the **child welfare system**. The DHS 94 grievance procedure has no jurisdiction over child welfare matters. After exhausting the county's grievance process regarding child welfare issues, the next step available to the father was to contact the Office of Strategic Finance (OSF) Regional Office. (Level IV decision in Case No. 06-SGE-07 on 9/25/06)